

SHMOT Rabbi Wein

There are crises that develop slowly and gradually while there are others that are sudden, surprising and unexpected. We see that in Jewish history both types of difficulties abound. The fall of the northern kingdom of Israel – that of the ten tribes – was sudden and unexpected. Only a short time before the northern kingdom of Israel had been one of the major military powers in the area.

The destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem and of the kingdom of Judah more than a century later was a long drawn out affair completely predictable and predicted. In perfect hindsight, a strong case can be made that based on the history of anti-Semitism in Europe and especially its virulence in the period between the two world wars of the twentieth century, the occurrence of a Holocaust, though perhaps not its magnitude could also have been foreseen.

The enslavement of the Jewish people in Egyptian bondage was certainly something that was unexpected and unforeseen. Even though the Jewish people had a tradition from their forefather Abraham that they would be enslaved in a strange country for a considerable period of time, they apparently did not feel that Egypt was that country and that this would be that time.

After all, Joseph was the savior of Egypt and the Jews felt comfortable living in Egypt and, to a certain extent, even integrating themselves into the general Egyptian society. All of this would be to no avail for there would arise a Pharaoh who chose not to acknowledge Joseph and the past and turned his unjustified wrath against the Jewish population of Egypt. And this all happened rapidly and almost without warning.

There are conflicting opinions in Midrash regarding the spiritual standards of the Jewish people before and during their enslavement there. There is an opinion that they were traditional, God-fearing and stubborn. They retained their language, mode of dress and moral behavior. There is another almost opposite opinion that they too had become pagans, worshiped idols and were not very different than the other members of Egyptian society at that time.

One can easily say that both opinions are correct because they are referencing different groups within the Jewish people. The tribe of Levi remained loyal to the tenets of the house of Jacob and to the monotheistic tradition, which made it unique amongst all nations of that ancient world. However, undoubtedly there were many others, perhaps even the vast majority of the Jewish people, who assimilated completely into Egyptian society.

They were the victims of an anti-Jewish decree that they never understood. After all, they were good Egyptians, so why were they singled out for enslavement. The Midrash also teaches us that a vast number of these Jews never made it out of Egypt when the eventual redemption occurred. This perhaps was even voluntary on their part for we see that throughout the years in the desert of Sinai, there was a constant call from some of the Jews to return to Egypt even if that meant slavery and hardship.

The original exile of the Jews in Egypt serves as a paradigm for all later exiles and persecutions, no matter if they come on suddenly or gradually. This makes this Torah reading extremely relevant to our current Jewish world.

Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

RAV AVINER

The Height of a Shul

Q: Why aren't we particular today to follow the Halachah that a Shul is supposed to be the tallest building in a city (Shulchan Aruch 150:2)? A: The Magen Avraham (ibid.) already asks this question. A few different answers are given. For example, the tallest buildings today are not for beauty but for housing people, whereas Shuls are built in a beautiful fashion. See Piskei Teshuvot 150:7 (It is told in the name of the Chazon Ish that the city of Bnei Brak is saved from attacks by the fact that the Ponevitch and Slabodka Yeshivot are the tallest buildings in the city. In the book "Ratzon Tzadik" it is related

in the name of the Satmar Rebbe that when they built the main Shul/Beit Midrash in Kiryas Yoel in New York, they asked him if the main Shul needs to be the tallest building in the city. The elderly Chasidim told him that it was difficult for them to walk up the hill and would refrain from coming to the Shul/Beit Midrash. The Satmar Rebbe sent the question to Ha-Rav Getzel Berkowitz, the Dayan of Kiryas Yoel and author of Shut Elgei Devash. He answered that the Yavetz writes in his book "Mor U-Ketziah" that one should be lenient since it is impossible for everyone to ascend to the top of the mountain. This is also the opinion of the Chida in Machazik Beracha. Furthermore, the Meiri holds that if the city's tall houses and towers were not built to display authority there is no need to be particular that the Shul be on the top of the mountain. Rather, the Shul should be the largest building in the city. Based on these sources, the Satmar Rebbe ruled that the Shul/Beit Midrash be built elsewhere and that it be the largest building in the city. Also brought in the book "Be-Didi Hevei Uvda" p. 546).

Tza'ar Ba'alei Chaim for Fish Q: Does the prohibition of "Tza'ar Ba'alei Chaim" (causing pain to animals) apply to fish?

A: Yes. Shut Mishneh Halachot 6:216).

Rabin's Murder

Q: My friends were arguing whether it was permissible to murder Yitzchak Rabin. What is Ha-Rav's opinion?

A: It says in the 10 Commandments: Do not murder! Our Sages discuss whether it is proper to recite the 10 Commandments every day and they concluded that one should refrain from doing so (Berachot 12a). But in your case, it is a good idea.

Rav Yochanan Zweig

GROWING PAINS

It happened in those days that Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and saw their burdens... (2:11)

This week's parsha introduces Pharaoh's scheme and implementation of the Jewish enslavement. The Torah also discusses Moshe's birth and development, and how he came to be the greatest prophet and leader of the Jewish people.

It is well known that Moshe grew up in Pharaoh's house. Rashi (ad loc) explains that not only did Moshe grow into adulthood, he grew in stature as well. As Rashi explains, "Pharaoh appointed him over his household ('Beis Pharaoh')." Rashi by the Aseres Hadibros (20:2) explains that the Jewish slaves were owned directly by Pharaoh and were part of 'Beis Pharaoh.' Thus Pharaoh took the innovative step of appointing Moshe over his fellow Jews.

This was no accident. Many tyrants and despots appoint members of the victim class over the other victims. In fact, in Egypt the "Shotrim" were Jewish officers appointed over the other slaves in Egypt to violently enforce quotas (which the Shotrim refused to do). Similarly, cruel Kapos were the method used by the the Nazis to control prisoners in the concentration camps.

Theoretically, this is brilliant. It naturally pits members of the oppressed class against one another and breeds mistrust and deception; thereby destroying the unity of the group - exactly what it is supposed to achieve. Pharaoh also added an insidious twist: By appointing Moshe over them Pharaoh was showcasing what a Jew can aspire to if he abandons his culture and becomes fully Egyptian.

But Pharaoh underestimated Moshe. He expected Moshe to sympathize with them and, at most, perhaps even advocate for better treatment. Yet Rashi makes a remarkable comment on the words "and he saw their burdens" (2:11); "He focused his eyes and heart to be distressed over them." Moshe didn't merely sympathize and feel pity for them, Moshe empathized with them. Sympathy is merely seeing someone's pain and feeling bad for them; however, empathy is a vicarious experience of what another is going through.

Rashi is telling us that Moshe focused his eyes and heart to see what the slaves saw and feel what the slaves felt; he was seeing their situation from their perspective. In fact, Moshe later uses this

understanding in his conversations with Hashem. This is probably one of the reasons Moshe was asked by Hashem to fill the role he did. This is also why Moshe is sentenced to death for killing the Egyptian. On the face of it, this seems a little strange. A prince growing up in the house of a king rarely would be subject to such justice. But once Moshe kills the Egyptian because of what he did to a "lowly" Jew he undermines Pharaoh's vision for his position in the palace - therefore he must flee for his life.

A CALLING FOR SERVICE

The anger of Hashem burned against Moshe and he said, "Is not your brother Aharon the Levi? I know that he will speak, behold he is coming out to meet and when he sees you he will rejoice in his heart" (4:14).

After a full week of trying to persuade Moshe to accept the position of redeemer of Bnei Yisroel, Hashem displays anger toward Moshe. This follows the last of Moshe's objections as to why he should not be the one charged with this responsibility. Rashi (ad loc) explains that Hashem's anger at Moshe's final argument resulted in him losing the position of Kohen, and being "demoted" to position of Levi.

Additionally, Rashi (ad loc) explains that Moshe was concerned that Aharon would be jealous of his new leadership position. Hashem therefore reassured him that Aharon would actually be happy for him. Rashi also points out that it was for this reason that Aharon merited to become Kohen.

This seems a little hard to understand. Certainly Moshe wouldn't accuse Aharon of being a lesser man than he, so this means that had the roles been reversed and he had been in Aharon's sandals, Moshe himself would have been jealous. Why would Moshe be jealous, and if in fact it was natural to be jealous of this appointment, why wasn't Aharon himself jealous?

Interestingly enough, we do find an instance in the Torah where Moshe feels a twinge of jealousy. The Yalkut Shimoni (Devarim 31:941) points out that Moshe experienced jealousy when he saw Yehoshua, his very own student, supplant him as leader of Bnei Yisroel and receive a communication from Hashem that he himself wasn't privy to. Moshe said, "It is better to experience one thousand deaths than to experience one instance of jealousy."

Clearly Moshe felt jealous because he saw his student taking his place, and the pain of seeing the loss of one's own position can be overwhelming. So why didn't Aharon feel jealous? After all, his younger brother was being given a position of leadership that rightfully belonged to him.

Aharon recognized that while it's true that redeeming Bnei Yisroel and becoming their leader was a position of greatness, it's not an appointment. In other words, when Hashem asks you to take this role, it's one primarily of service to Bnei Yisroel and Hashem's plan for the world. This job isn't about the stature that comes with the responsibility, it's about being a servant to that responsibility.

Moshe was bothered by the stature associated with the job. He spends a week explaining why he isn't the right person for this job. When at the end of the week he still feels that Aharon would be jealous of his new position, Hashem gets angry and explains to him that Aharon understands that this is about responsibility to serve - not the associated stature. It is for this reason that Moshe loses the right to be a Kohen and this role is given to Aharon. Kohanim are "Meshorsei Hamelech" - ministers of the king. There is no sense of stature in this leadership role; only responsibility to serve Hashem. Aharon understood that when called to the responsibility of serving Hashem you have to accept and that stature plays no role in the decision.

Parshat Shemot (Exodus 1:1 – 6:1)

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel — "And Pharaoh commanded his entire nation saying, every male baby born must be thrown into the Nile, while every female baby shall be allowed to live." [Ex. 1:22]

In decreeing the destruction of the Israelites in Egypt, why does Pharaoh distinguish between the genders? Apparently afraid to keep

the Israelite men alive lest they wage a rebellion against him, Pharaoh is confident that the Israelite women will not pose a threat, as they will presumably marry Egyptian men and assimilate into Egyptian society.

This strategy underscores Pharaoh's ignorance – or denial – of the pivotal role women play in the development of a nation, and stands in stark contrast to the perspective of our Sages [Midrash Yalkut Shimoni], who declare that it was "in the merit of the righteous Israelite women that the Jewish People were redeemed from Egypt". The Talmud [Shabbat 118b] teaches, "I always call my wife 'my home,' since the real bulwark of the home is the woman of the house. As the Jewish nation emerged from a family, and family units are the bedrock of every society, it is clearly the women who are of supreme importance.

Pharaoh was blind to this. Apparently, he had no tradition of matriarchs such as Sarah and Rebecca, who directed the destiny of a national mission. For him, women were the weaker gender who were there to be used and taken advantage of. This is why Pharaoh attempts to utilize the Hebrew midwives to do his dirty work of actually murdering the male babies on the birth stools. To his surprise, the women rebelled: "And the midwives feared the Lord, so they did not do what the king of Egypt told them to do; they kept the male babies alive" (ibid. 1:17).

Taking it one step further, the Talmud [Sotah 11b] identifies the Israelite midwives as Yocheved (the mother of Moses and Aaron) and Miriam, their sister. The Midrash continues that Amram, their husband and father, respectively, was the head of the Israelite court. Upon learning of Pharaoh's decree to destroy all male babies, he ruled that Israelite couples divorce, in order to cease reproduction. After all, why should people continue normal married life, only to have their baby sons killed?

Miriam chides her father: "Your decree is more harsh than that of Pharaoh! He made a decree only against male babies, but you are making a decree against female babies, as well." Amram, persuaded by his daughter's rebuke, remarries Yocheved, who conceives and gives birth to Moses, savior of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Miriam is actually following in a fine family tradition of fortitude and optimism. Her grandmothers, the mothers of Amram and Yocheved, gave birth to children during the bleakest days of oppression. Despite the slavery and carnage all around, one mother gives her son the name Amram, which means "exalted nation"; the other mother gives her daughter the name Yocheved, which means "glory to God." Such was their confidence in the potential of the Jewish People and their faith in the Source of their people's greatness.

These two women were able to look beyond the dreadful state to which the Israelites had fallen in Egypt; their sights were held high, upon the stars of the heavens which God promised Abraham would symbolize his progeny and the Covenant of the Pieces which guaranteed the Hebrews a glorious future in the Land of Israel. These two proud grandmothers from the tribe of Levi merited grandchildren such as Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

Pharaoh begins to learn his lesson when Moses asks for a three-day journey in the desert; Pharaoh wants to know who will go. Moses insists: "Our youth and our old people will go, our sons and our daughters will go – our entire households will go, our women as well as our men" [ibid. 10:8]. A wiser Pharaoh will now only allow the men to leave; he now understands that he has most to fear from the women!

And so it is no wonder that Passover, the festival of our freedom, is celebrated in the Torah with "a lamb for each house," with the women included in the paschal sacrificial meal by name no less than the men. In our time, we find this idea expressed in the observances of the Passover Seder (the drinking of the four cups of wine, the eating of matza, and the telling of the story of the exodus, etc.), which are binding on women no less than men.

A Postscript:

One of my strongest childhood memories take place at a Seder at the home of my maternal grandparents. The entire family, including the seven married children of my grandparents, as well as their children, comprised well over fifty participants, My grandfather led the entire

gathering in the reading of the Haggadah word for word; when anyone had a question about any of the passages, he/she was encouraged to ask. My grandfather would then always defer to my grandmother to give the answer, because he greatly respected the fact that she had learned Talmud with her father, the Dayan (rabbinical court judge) Rav Shlomo Kowalsky. Indeed, during the Seder, when my grandmother would go into the kitchen to check on the pots of food, my grandfather would stop the Haggadah reading until my grandmother re-joined us at the table, and only then would the Seder continue.

Shabbat Shalom

No More Suffering in Silence

by Jonathan Rosenblum

Mishpacha

A remarkable event for English-speaking married women took place in Jerusalem on Sunday, 5 Kislev. Over 3,000 women poured into Binyanei HaUma's Ussishkin Hall, with many others turned away at the door due to fire regulations.

The sponsoring organization, Tahareinu, only learned two weeks before the event that Binyanei HaUma's larger hall (nearly three times the capacity of the smaller Teddy Hall) would be available, after a thousand tickets had already been sold. That obviated any possibility of assigned seating. Nevertheless, the event started on time, in large part due to the presence of more than one hundred volunteers eager to show women where to go. And no less remarkably, it ended just after 10:30, despite the packed schedule.

That the event generated unprecedented buzz in advance is not surprising. It had been advertised since Succos, and featured three speakers well-known to the crowd. Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits is one of the leading poskim for the English-speaking community of Jerusalem, and intimately involved in Tahareinu, an organization that helps women understand and navigate the various medical issues surrounding taharas mishpacha. Rebbetzin Yemima Mizrahi burst like a supernova on the scene just a few years back, and has attracted huge audiences around the world with her unique combination of drama, humor, and overflowing Torah content. And the headline speaker Rabbi Yisrocher Frand has not spoken in Israel in many years.

In addition, four very well-known rebbetzins spoke in brief, but compelling, presentations around the theme of "Defining Ourselves." Rebbetzin Chaya Levine, whose husband, Rabbi Kalman Levine, Hy"d, was one of the five kedoshim murdered in the Har Nof Massacre, spoke about facing nisayonos, without any reference to her own personal tragedy. She talked about the necessity of recognizing each trial as custom-made by Hashem to maximize our potential.

Rebbetzin Dina Schoonmaker explicated the Gemara in Sanhedrin (22a) that describes the world as growing dark for a man who loses his wife – his steps shorten, he loses his sense of direction and purpose. Every wife, she explained, potentially holds a candle to her husband that illuminates him – what is unique about him, what is his potential – in a way the universal light of the sun -- i.e., the way everyone else in the world views him -- does not.

Rebbetzin Rena Tarshish related how Rav Meir Shapiro, the builder of the magnificent Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin and initiator of the Daf HaYomi, spoke of his mother at the yeshiva's dedication and how she planted the seed of ahavas Torah, without which neither Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin nor the Daf HaYomi would have come into being. Reb Meir shared his childhood memory of his mother waiting impatiently for his melamed to come and of her tears when he did not. When he tried to console her that the melamed would come the next day, she replied, "A day without Torah is a day lost forever." His mother's tears of ahavas HaTorah, said Rav Meir, were the inspiration for all that followed.

Many of the halachos of prayer, Rebbetzin Tzipora Heller pointed out, are derived from Chana's prayer. But surely the Avos prayed. So what was it specifically that is learned from Chana about avoda she'b'lev? That she expressed her total dedication to a particular goal silently, from the deepest recesses of her heart, Rebbetzin Heller answered.

The event took place the week of parashas Va'yetzei, and Rebbetzin Yemima Mizrahi poignantly portrayed the yearning of both Rachel Imeinu and Leah Imeinu to be the mothers of the twelve tribes, and all that they sacrificed to do so. Tahor (pure), she noted, is related to Tzohar (a window through which light shines), and the process of attaining tahara is one of waiting expectantly for a new opportunity, just as one looks out the window in anticipation.

Before he spoke, Rabbi Frand told me that his female audience would be puzzled by his opening disquisition on military tactics. People still remember the name General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of the Allied forces in the first Gulf War, he began. But who remembers the name of the general in charge of logistics, an operation every bit as complicated as the combat aspects. Even Google may not bring up the name General William Gus Pagonis. Yet, as the saying goes, "an army marches on its stomach," and but

for General Pagonis, the war could not have been fought. Women, he told his audience, are the unsung heroes, the General Pagonis's who make everything possible.

And in the DNA of every Jewish woman is an almost unlimited capacity for mesiras nefesh. As an example he concluded with a story from Rabbi Yechiel Spero's biography of Rabbi Mordechai Gifter. When the Lithuanians who served as the Nazis' willing executioners came to murder the Jewish women and children of Telshe, Rebbetzin Luba Bloch, wife of Rabbi Zalman Bloch and the mother of Rebbetzin Gifter, offered to show her killer the hiding place of her jewelry in return for granting one request.

And what was that request? That she be murdered after her young children. When the request was granted, she lowered herself into the mass grave of her children and closed the eyes of each one and covered each with handfuls of dirt. And then, as the murderer waited to finish his task, she offered praise to the Ribbono shel Olam for having allowed her to bring her precious children to kever Yisrael.

SUCH A POWERFUL EVENING OF CHIZUK needed no justification beyond itself. But Rabbi Yitzchak Melber, the founder of Toras HaMishpacha, which includes two divisions, Tahareinu and Zareinu, did not raise well over \$100,000 only to celebrate Jewish wives and mothers. His goal was to publicize the services of Tahareinu to the widest possible audience. He was engaged in another form of pirsumei nisa in Kislev.

Dovid Hamelech proclaimed, "Chassid ani," before the Ribbono shel Olam, because while other kings busied themselves with their own kavod he was occupied with permitting wives to their husbands (Berachos 4a). In that same spirit, Tahareinu is a holy mission for Rabbi Melber.

Though the Tahareinu hotline staffed by thirty female volunteers and eight rabbis takes over 3,000 inquiries a month from all over the world, there are many more women and couples who could be helped if they knew of Toras HaMishpacha. "There is so much suffering in silence simply because women and couples do not have access to the necessary information," Rabbi Melber says.

The advances of medical knowledge in the area of women's health are so rapid that no rabbi, and not even most doctors, can keep up. "The Ribbono shel Olam is revealing the secrets of Creation," Rabbi Berkovits told the women's gathering. He related how the great posek Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach had counseled him to not to permit irreversible procedures, except in the rarest and most dire cases, because medical advances today are so rapid. And, fortunately, Israel is at the forefront of many of those advances.

But perhaps the most important point made by Rabbi Berkovits is that today there are medical solutions for a multitude of conditions and situations that can cause great stress to couples and impinge greatly on Shalom Bayis.

The problem is that a lot of players hold some of the information, but not all. Many doctors do not understand the practical implications of the problems patients present because they do not know halacha. The more doctors understand of the halachic implications for couples in their care the more likely they are to search for solutions.

Rabbis may have vast halachic knowledge, but lack information of medical advances. Toras HaMishpacha aims to remedy these large gaps by serving as a conduit of information in both directions. Its annual rabbinical conference in Israel attracts more than 500 rabbis to hear from leading medical experts in the various relevant fields, and the organization runs many smaller rabbinical conferences throughout the year and in the United States and Great Britain. It also arranges courses for mikveh attendants and teachers of chassanim and kallos.

The thirty or so women who staff the Tahareinu hotline receive 250 hours of instruction before they field any inquiries, and attend monthly continuing education courses. Each commits to working at least eight hours a week.

But even the requisite knowledge is not enough. No less important is the patience to listen carefully to couples who come to consult and offer emotional support. Even the biggest medical experts often take little more than ten to fifteen minutes to explain their recommendations, leaving the couple confused and in the dark, like subjects on a medical conveyor belt. The rabbis and counselors of Toras HaMishpacha listen patiently to those who come to discuss their difficulties, explain in detail the various medical options, and also the reasons a doctor may have requested certain tests or recommended a particular procedure.

On a visit to the Toras HaMishpacha office in Jerusalem, Rabbi Melber showed me a stack of letters from grateful beneficiaries. The first thing that struck me is that they were not simple thankyou notes, but of megillah-length in most cases. The constant refrain is gratitude for the patience and support shown by the rabbis and counselors of Toras HaMishpacha.

One example: "We were no longer alone in this ordeal; we had a guiding hand to pull us through the dark days. It was so reassuring to be able to discuss every test and procedure with someone who truly cared and spoke our language."

REGULAR READERS OF THIS COLUMN know that I view the multitude of initiatives by individuals who saw a need within our community and set out to fill that need as one of the clearest indicators of the astonishing vitality of

chareidi life. So needless to say, the story of a Talmudic prodigy, who grew up in New Square and could barely sign his name in English at the time of his chasanah, who ten years later set out to emulate the encyclopedic medical knowledge of Rabbi Elimelech Firer, in the specific area of women's health, has great appeal for me. Already six years ago, in the early days of Toras HaMishpacha, Rabbi Melber published a seven-volume work on the intersection of halacha and medicine in this particular area. And I have personally witnessed in several forums, the respect shown him by prominent doctors and medical researchers.

One of the many emails received in the days just after the recent event captures my feelings well: "I am just writing so say what a massive Kiddush Hashem the Tahareinu event made on me and I am sure on thousands of others. I woke up the morning after the Tahareinu event filled with so much joy to be part of a nation that creates things like Tahareinu."

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly ;; Parshat Shmot by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

For the week ending 21 January 2017 / 23 Tevet 5777 Insights

Cracking the Code "They will heed your (Moshe's) voice..." (3:18)

Nations spend megabucks on keeping their communications secret. But a code, however sophisticated, can always be cracked.

In 1939 it was generally believed at the British Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) at Bletchley Park that the Nazi's "Enigma" code could not be broken. Only the head of England's German Naval Section, Frank Birch, and the mathematician Alan Turing believed otherwise. Using an embryonic computer and a lot of hard work, GC&CS managed to break "Enigma". This resulted in a dramatic turn-around in the Atlantic War. Enigma intercepts helped the British to plot the positions of U-boat patrol lines, and adjust the routes of the Allied convoys to avoid them. Losses of merchant-ships dropped by more than two-thirds in July 1941.

"They will heed your voice..."

G-d assured Moshe that the elders would heed Moshe's call because they had received a tradition from Yaakov and Yosef that the eventual redeemer would use the expression, "I have surely remembered." (Rashi) The question remains: What if someone else "broke the code" and purported to be the true redeemer? What would stop him from misleading the Jewish People with disastrous results?

"It happened sometime later, in the days of the wheat harvest, that Samson remembered his wife..." (Shoftim 16:1) The word "remembered" here is "yifkod", an expression of love and yearning — and it's exactly the same word used by Yaakov and Yosef.

There was another dimension to Yaakov and Yosef's code — and that indeed made it truly unbreakable: The Jewish People knew that not only would the true redeemer use the correct word — pokad — but he would ignite in their hearts a burning love and yearning for the G-d of Yisrael and the Land of Israel.

And that's not something you can crack.

Source: The Kotzker Rebbe

OU Torah

Parshat Shemot: Open Eyes, and an Open Heart

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

I was always taught of the advantage of simplicity in language. My favorite author during my adolescence was Ernest Hemingway, and I remember reading comments that he made criticizing those who used multi-syllable words when shorter words would suffice.

Then, I went to graduate school in psychology and learned quite the opposite lesson. There I learned that if one could invent a word with multiple syllables to describe a simple phenomenon, he could gain credibility as an expert, even without real expertise.

Take, for example, a word with seven syllables: compartmentalization. Sounds impressive, but what does it mean? The dictionary that I consulted offers two meanings. One, "the act of distributing things into classes or categories of the same type." A simple definition, but one having nothing to do with psychology.

The second dictionary definition that I discovered is "a mild state of dissociation." Of course, to understand this definition, one must know that dissociation is a psychological process by which one splits two

sets of perceptions or emotions into two separate inner worlds so that one does not affect the other.

All of us practice compartmentalization in this sense when we turn on the television, see some news events that are especially troubling to us and simply turn off the TV. Many of us did this when we witnessed the horrible forest fires in northern Israel and the damage and suffering, both physical and emotional, that they caused. Watching the agony of the families whose loved ones were affected by those fires was, for many of us, too much to bear. And so, perhaps after a minute or so, we turned off the TV to avoid being confronted with such human suffering.

This might be normal human behavior, and perhaps even necessary to avoid being constantly overwhelmed with negative emotions. But it is not the behavior of a true leader. And it was not the behavior of Moses in this week's Torah portion, Shemot.

Rather, "...he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens..." (Exodus 2:11). Upon which Rashi comments, "He gave his eyes and his heart [in order] to be troubled about them". Not only did he not avoid the scene of Jewish suffering, but he made sure that he beheld it ("his eyes"), and that it affected him emotionally ("his heart").

Two very important, albeit very different, early 20th century commentators have much to say about our verse. Rabbi Joseph Hertz, in his sadly neglected commentary, writes, "He went out to his brethren. In later ages it must alas be said of many a son of Israel who had become great, that he went away from his brethren." How well this former chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth captures the notion of compartmentalization. It is the process by which we "look away" from upsetting scenes, rather than carefully looking "at them". Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv, known as the "Alter" (old man) of Kelm devotes the opening sermon of his remarkable collection of ethical discourses to our verse and to the criticism of the psychological process which we call "compartmentalization".

The "Alter" points out that Moses was not content simply to hear about the suffering of his brothers while he sat comfortably in the palace. Rather he "went out" to see for himself. Moses wanted to witness the suffering of his brothers personally. Moses knew the secret of the power of direct sensory perception. Moses wanted to have the image of the burdens of slavery impressed upon his mind's eye.

For the "Alter", who was one of the earliest leaders of the Mussar movement, ethical behavior demands the use of imagery to arouse emotions and thus stimulate proper ethical behavior. Moses used his eyes to inspire his heart to motivate his actions. Vision, feeling, behavior: the three essential components of the truly ethical personality.

The lesson for all of us here is that to be a truly ethical person, one must invest in the effort of becoming familiar with the plight of others. One must avoid the temptation of "looking away". From a psychological perspective, compartmentalization might be a healthy defense mechanism, necessary to avoid being flooded by images of evil. From an ethical perspective, on the other hand, compartmentalization is a seven-syllable word which, in simple terms, means avoidance of one's responsibilities to another.

How instructive is the Hasidic tale of the Rabbi who met the village drunkard in the town square. The drunkard asked him, "Rabbi, do you love me?" To which the rabbi replied, "Of course I love you. I love all Jews!"

The drunkard then responded, "So tell me then, Rabbi. What hurts me?" The rabbi had no answer, and so the drunkard exclaimed, "If you truly loved me, you would know what hurts me."

To know what hurts, we must be sure to open our eyes and hearts to see and feel the pain. © 2017 Orthodox Union

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Shemos

Yocheved Miraculously Becomes Young Again For Good Reason

The pasuk says, "And a man went from the House of Levi and he married the daughter of Levi" [Shmos 2:1]. Rashi quotes the Gemara

[Sotah 12a] that Amram had separated from his wife Yocheved because of his fear of the decree “All male children shall be thrown into the Nile” [Shmos 1:22] and he was now remarrying her based on the advice of his daughter. Miriam complained to him “Your decree is worse than that of Pharaoh. Pharaoh’s decree was only directed at the male children and your decree impacts both male and female offspring.” Amram, thus, was now marrying Yocheved for the second time. Rashi further explains that when this happen Yocheved became like a young woman again (even though she was actually 130 years old) as indicated by the fact that the Torah calls hers “the daughter of Levi.”

I saw an interesting observation in the sefer Abir Yosef. Hashem does not perform miracles capriciously. He only makes miracles which serve a purpose. Why, then, was it necessary for Yocheved at this point to become a young woman again? It does not suffice to answer that she needed to become young again to become pregnant and have Moshe Rabbeinu. The reason this answer is insufficient because Moshe Rabbeinu was only three years younger than his brother Aharon. Yocheved was 127 when she gave birth to Aharon. That itself is miraculous. Maharal explains that indeed all of the Jewish reproductive activity in Egypt was miraculous. Women gave birth to sextuplets on a regular basis. So if Yocheved had a child at 127 and was fertile at that age, there was no need for the additional miracle that she became “young again” at the age of 130! What then is the point of the miracle that Chazal stress that Yocheved became like a young woman before the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu?

The Abir Yosef suggests that it is true that Amram was convinced that he should marry Yocheved again and he was convinced that he should try to have more children. However, that did not remove the terrible anxiety and fear that he and everybody else must have felt that “all male children will be thrown into the Nile.” Even if he was going to take Yocheved back, he needed the oomph, desire, courage, and get up and go under those circumstances to have a baby. Who knew what was going to be? He had to be in a state of mind to have the exuberance in those trying times to father another child. How did the Ribono shel Olam help him do that? By marrying a young woman! If she had been the same old woman who he divorced beforehand then “okay, second time around” but he would not have had that same cheshek, that same desire.

The “Simchas Chassunah” [Joy of a Wedding] is always dependent on the status of the woman. For example, if the woman has never been married before, there are seven days of Sheva Brochos. However, if she has been married before, the Sheva Brachos are shorter. When a person is happy, he is obviously more receptive to take on new challenges than when he is depressed and disheartened. HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave Amram the exuberance, drive, and desire to take on the challenge of those traumatic times by miraculously making the woman he was (re)marrying into a young woman once again. This put him in a better frame of mind and gave him the encouragement to father another child... who was destined to be the savior of Israel.

Why Was Moshe Willing To Blow His Cover?

The pasuk says, “It happened in those days that Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and saw their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man, of his brethren” [Shmos 2:11]. The Medrash interprets the words “and he saw their burdens” to mean he saw that they did not have a day or rest — they were working seven days a week. At this point, of course, Moshe was still a “stepson” to Pharaoh, raised in the palace of the king. According to the Medrash, Moshe went to his stepfather and told him that it was in the national interest to give Pharaoh’s slaves a day off once a week. He argued, if you do not give your slaves a chance to rest up one day a week, they will die from being over worked.

Pharaoh accepted Moshe’s suggestion and they were granted one day a week off. The Medrash says that the day they took off was Shabbos and they used to spend their time reading Megillos and certain chapters of Tehillim (e.g. — Mizmor shir l’Yom haShabbos).

The sefer Ikvei Erev wonders why Pharaoh agreed to Moshe’s suggestion. Wasn’t it his agenda to kill them all off? He ordered all the male children to be thrown into the Nile and his grand plan was to

get rid of all these people! Pharaoh was part of the “great tradition” of solving the Jewish problem by eradication of the Jews. So how is it that Pharaoh was receptive to Moshe’s argument “if you work them seven days a week you will kill them all out?”

The Ikvei Erev suggests that Pharaoh’s plan regarding the Jews evolved. Originally, he wanted to wipe them all out. That took time — “All the males shall be thrown into the Nile.” In the meantime, the Jews were “fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong...” and Pharaoh had thousands, hundreds of thousands and maybe millions of slaves. Once free labor became the norm, the idea of killing them all out became less appealing. Eradication of this free labor pool would be a major shock to the Egyptian economy. Moshe Rabbeinu realized that and he knew that Pharaoh’s lust for money trumped his hatred of the Jews. This is the nature of people. Free labor was too much for him to part with.

Originally, before he became accustomed to the free labor, he decreed, “throw the newborn males into the Nile”. However, now a few years later, when he saw the economic boon the free labor was providing his economy, he put his philosophical and racial hatred aside and was receptive to suggestions that would enhance the productivity of his source of free Jewish labor.

This leads us to another observation. If we see one thing from this whole incident, it is that Moshe Rabbeinu had an influence on Pharaoh. The fact that they received a free day was only by virtue of the fact that Moshe had an “in” in the palace and could use his privilege to convince Pharaoh to give the Jews a day off.

Subsequently, Moshe sees an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man... and he kills the Egyptian and hides him in the sand. The Alter of Novardok asks a question: Why didn’t Moshe make a calculation — there is one Jew here who is being beat up by an Egyptian. If I go ahead and save the Jew I will blow my cover. Pharaoh will be so angry that he will probably banish me. Is it not worthwhile to let this Jew get beaten up and even killed, because of the larger picture that this will enable me to protect my “cover” and retain my privileged status with Pharaoh which has already proven beneficial for the Jews at large (by gaining them a “day off”)?

The Alter of Novardok answers that Moshe did not make this calculation because when he saw that this Egyptian was beating up a Jew and no one was coming to the Jew’s aid, he looked at a reality that would have doomed Klal Yisrael — namely, the reality that one Jew does not care about the fate of another Jew. The Alter interprets “and he turned this way and that and saw that there was no man...” to mean that Moshe looked in all directions and he saw that there was no one willing to come to the assistance of this suffering Jew. If the Jewish nation is in a mindset of “every man for himself” then there will never be a Geulah [redemption]. The only way there will be a Geulah is when every Jew cares for every other Jew.

Taking the larger perspective, in an approach that would make Geulah possible, Moshe Rabbeinu needed to make a statement: I am going to stand up for another Jew. Even if this costs me my position and my power of influence with Pharaoh, it is worth it because the only way Klal Yisrael will get out of Galus [exile] is when one Jew cares for another. By killing the Egyptian and making this statement and having thereby to flee from the house of Pharaoh, Moshe sent a loud and strong message: We must all feel for our fellow Jews. Because he took that action and impressed the Jews with that message, the Jewish people eventually merited redemption from Egypt.

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The Times of Israel

The Blogs : : Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Who Am I? (Shemot 5777)

Moses’ second question to God at the burning bush was, Who are you? “So I will go to the Israelites and say, ‘Your fathers’ God sent me to you.’ They will immediately ask me what His name is. What shall I say to them?” (Ex. 3:13). God’s reply, Ehyeh asher ehyeh, wrongly translated in almost every Christian Bible as something like

"I am that I am," deserves an essay in its own right (I deal with it in my books *Future Tense* and *The Great Partnership*).

"His first question, though, was, *Mi anochi*, "Who am I?" (Ex. 3:11).

"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" said Moses to God. "And how can I possibly get the Israelites out of Egypt?" On the surface the meaning is clear. Moses is asking two things. The first: who am I, to be worthy of so great a mission? The second: how can I possibly succeed?

God answers the second. "Because I will be with you." You will succeed because I am not asking you to do it alone. I am not really asking you to do it at all. I will be doing it for you. I want you to be My representative, My mouthpiece, My emissary and My voice.

God never answered the first question. Perhaps in a strange way Moses answered himself. In Tanakh as a whole, the people who turn out to be the most worthy are the ones who deny they are worthy at all. The prophet Isaiah, when charged with his mission, said, 'I am a man of unclean lips' (Is. 6:5). Jeremiah said, 'I cannot speak, for I am a child' (Jer. 1:6). David, Israel's greatest king, echoed Moses' words, 'Who am I?' (2 Samuel 7:18). Jonah, sent on a mission by God, tried to run away. According to Rashbam, Jacob was about to run away when he found his way blocked by the man/angel with whom he wrestled at night (Rashbam to Gen. 32:23).

The heroes of the Bible are not figures from Greek or any other kind of myth. They are not people possessed of a sense of destiny, determined from an early age to achieve fame. They do not have what the Greeks called *megalopsychia*, a proper sense of their own worth, a gracious and lightly worn superiority. They did not go to Eton or Oxford. They were not born to rule. They were people who doubted their own abilities. There were times when they felt like giving up. Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah and Jonah reached points of such despair that they prayed to die. They became heroes of the moral life against their will. There was work to be done – God told them so – and they did it. It is almost as if a sense of smallness is a sign of greatness. So God never answered Moses' question. "Why me?"

But there is another question within the question. "Who am I?" can be not just a question about worthiness. It can also be a question about identity. Moses, alone on Mount Horeb/Sinai, summoned by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, is not just speaking to God when he says those words. He is also speaking to himself. "Who am I?"

There are two possible answers. The first: Moses is a prince of Egypt. He had been adopted as a baby by Pharaoh's daughter. He had grown up in the royal palace. He dressed like an Egyptian, looked and spoke like an Egyptian. When he rescued Jethro's daughters from some rough shepherds, they go back and tell their father, "An Egyptian saved us" (2:19). His very name, Moses, was given to him by Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:10). It was, presumably, an Egyptian name (in fact, Moses, as in Ramses, is the ancient Egyptian word for "child". The etymology given in the Torah, that Moses means "I drew him from the water," tells us what the word suggested to Hebrew speakers). So the first answer is that Moses was an Egyptian prince.

The second was that he was a Midianite. For, although he was Egyptian by upbringing, he had been forced to leave. He had made his home in Midian, married a Midianite woman Zipporah, daughter of a Midianite priest and was "content to live" there, quietly as a shepherd. We tend to forget that he spent many years there. He left Egypt as a young man and was already eighty years old at the start of his mission when he first stood before Pharaoh (Ex. 7:7). He must have spent the overwhelming majority of his adult life in Midian, far away from the Israelites on the one hand and the Egyptians on the other. Moses was a Midianite.

So when Moses asks, "Who am I?" it is not just that he feels himself unworthy. He feels himself uninvolved. He may have been Jewish by birth, but he had not suffered the fate of his people. He had not grown up as a Jew. He had not lived among Jews. He had good reason to doubt that the Israelites would even recognise him as one of them. How, then, could he become their leader? More penetratingly, why should he even think of becoming their leader? Their fate was not his. He was not part of it. He was not responsible for it. He did not suffer from it. He was not implicated in it.

What is more, the one time he had actually tried to intervene in their affairs – he killed an Egyptian taskmaster who had killed an Israelite slave, and the next day tried to stop two Israelites from fighting one another – his intervention was not welcomed. "Who made you ruler and judge over us?" they said to him. These are the first recorded words of an Israelite to Moses. He had not yet dreamed of being a leader and already his leadership was being challenged.

Consider, now, the choices Moses faced in his life. On the one hand he could have lived as a prince of Egypt, in luxury and at ease. That might have been his fate had he not intervened. Even afterward, having been forced to flee, he could have lived out his days quietly as a shepherd, at peace with the Midianite family into which he had married. It is not surprising that when God invited him to lead the Israelites to freedom, he resisted.

Why then did he accept? Why did God know that he was the man for the task? One hint is contained in the name he gave his first son. He called him Gershom because, he said, "I am a stranger in a foreign land" (2:22). He did not feel at home in Midian. That was where he was, but not who he was.

But the real clue is contained in an earlier verse, the prelude to his first intervention. "When Moses was grown, he began to go out to his own people, and he saw their hard labour" (2:11).

These people were his people. He may have looked like an Egyptian but he knew that ultimately he was not. It was a transforming moment, not unlike when the Moabite Ruth said to her Israelite mother-in-law Naomi, "Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16). Ruth was un-Jewish by birth. Moses was un-Jewish by upbringing. But both knew that when they saw suffering and identified with the sufferer, they could not walk away.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik called this a covenant of fate, *brit goral*. It lies at the heart of Jewish identity to this day. There are Jews who believe and those who don't. There are Jews who practise and those who don't. But there are few Jews indeed who, when their people are suffering, can walk away saying, This has nothing to do with me.

Maimonides, who defines this as "separating yourself from the community" (*poresh mi-darkhei ha-tibbur*, *Hilkhot Teshuva* 3:11), says that it is one of the sins for which you are denied a share in the world to come. This is what the Hagaddah means when it says of the wicked son that "because he excludes himself from the collective, he denies a fundamental principle of faith." What fundamental principle of faith? Faith in the collective fate and destiny of the Jewish people.

Who am I? asked Moses, but in his heart he knew the answer. I am not Moses the Egyptian or Moses the Midianite. When I see my people suffer I am, and cannot be other than, Moses the Jew. And if that imposes responsibilities on me, then I must shoulder them. For I am who I am because my people are who they are.

That is Jewish identity, then and now.

***Drasha - Parshas Shemos
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky
Tough Love***

Moshe, the humblest man who was ever on the face of this earth, the man who consistently pleaded with Hashem to spare the Jewish nation from his wrath, emerges this week for the very first time.

First impressions are almost always last impressions, so I wondered what are Moshe's first actions? Surely they would typify his future distinction.

Open a Chumash and explore the young lad who is found on the Nile, spends his youth in Pharaoh's palace, and finally "goes out amongst his brothers." He sees an Egyptian smiting a Jew and then, in a non-speaking role (at least without speaking to any human), he kills him. That is Moshe's foray in communal activism.

His first words seem diametrically opposed to his ensuing persona. The next day, Moshe "went out and behold, two Hebrew men were fighting." He immediately chastised the wicked one, "Why would you strike your fellow?" (Exodus 2:13). His admonition provokes an angry response from the quarrelers. "Who appointed you as a dignitary, a ruler, and a judge over us? Do you propose to murder me, as you murdered the Egyptian?" (ibid. v. 4). Moshe's hallmark compassion

and concern seems to be overshadowed by his forceful admonition. Is that the first impression the Torah wants us to have of Moshe?

In his youth, Reb Zorach Braverman, who later was known as a brilliant Jerusalem scholar, once travelled from Eishishok to Vilna, Lithuania. Sitting next to him was an elderly Jew with whom he began to converse. Reb Zorach commented to the old man that it was sad that in a city as large as Vilna there was no organized Torah youth group.

The old man became agitated. In a tear-stained voice he responded, "Whom do you expect to organize these groups, "he asked incredulously, " the communal leaders who are destroying Judaism in Vilna? They do nothing to promote Torah values!"

The man went on to condemn a group of parnasim who had assumed control of the community affairs and constantly overruled the Rabbinical authorities in every aspect of communal life as it related to observance of Jewish law. Reb Zorach became incensed. Who was this man to deride a group of community elders? He responded vociferously. "Excuse me," he interrupted, " but I think you should study the new sefer (book) that was just published. It is called Chofetz Chaim and deals specifically with the laws of slander and gossip. It details all the transgressions listed in the Torah for gossip as such! In fact, I have it here with me."

The old man asked to see the book. He took it and immediately opened it to a section which specified the rare instance it was a mitzvah to speak out against a group of people, in the case when they act defiantly against rabbinic authority.

Reb Zorach remained quiet and silently took back the book. The trip ended and the old man and Reb Zorach went their ways in Vilna. It only took a day until Reb Zorach found out that he was seated next to none other than the Chofetz Chaim himself.

Of course, Moshe was the compassionate advocate for Klal Yisrael. But the Torah chooses to define his leadership in a clear and unambiguous manner in strong and controversial encounters. His first act was to kill an Egyptian who was smiting a Jew, and his second was to chastise two Jews who were fighting so strongly that they threatened to report his former act to the Egyptian authorities. After the Torah establishes an ability to reprove and even rebuke sin, only then does it tell us of Moshe's compassion in protecting the daughters of Yisro, in tending sheep by running after a tiny lamb who lost its way in the scorching desert.

Often I hear quotes, "if Rav Moshe were alive today," or "if the Chofetz Chaim were alive today," followed by a notion that these beloved, departed, sages, with their celebrated love and compassion for all Jews, would surely ascribe to unmitigated love and acceptance of anyone's notion of Judaism as an acceptable alternative.

It's just not true. Great leaders and Torah visionaries do have tremendous love for all Jews, but they do not compromise on Torah law or on Torah values. They are vociferous advocates of right versus wrong. Though one minute they may be chasing lost sheep, running after a small child who dropped a small coin, or translating a letter for an indigent immigrant, they would not hesitate to strike the Egyptian and chastise their fellow Jew who raised his hand against another, physically or spiritually. What truly makes a great man is not only knowing how and when to hold them, but also knowing how and when to scold them.

*Dedicated in memory of David Kramer by Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Kramer
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The Times of Israel

The Blogs :: Rabbi Ben-Tzion Spitz

Shmot: There's no place like home

Thursday, January 19, 2017 Tevet 21, 5777

Even as the cell is the unit of the organic body, so the family is the unit of society. — Ruth Nanda Anshen

Pharaoh kills and enslaves the people of Israel. They lay oppressed, beaten, dismembered. They are so demoralized that their minds have no room even for hope. When Moses arrives and offers tidings of redemption, they are too overworked, too dispirited to even contemplate the possibility of an end to their travails.

But they would be liberated, they would reconstitute their lives, and the nation of Israel would be born out of the blood of slavery, death and tyranny.

Rabbi Hirsch on Exodus 1:1 explains that the reason for the successful liberation and creation of the Israelite nation is due to one vital component – the family:

At that time God would begin the upbuilding of His people not with the rooftops, as it were, but with the rocklike foundations of the home, which are based on the mutual bonds that unite parents and their children."

"Though each of them [the sons of Jacob] already had an independent household of his own, they all still cling firmly and closely to Jacob...All of them together are part of the same ancient tree, but each has become an independent branch, the center of a family of his own. They are still the children of Jacob, but now they also have children of their own. This family spirit which inspires each son to build his own household, but only as a branch of his father's house, and which enables every father to live on in his children and in his children's children, forming a close, eternal bond that binds the parents to their children and the children to their parents – this is the root of Israel's eternal flowering. Herein lies the secret of the eternity of the Jewish people."

That was the one element Pharaoh couldn't break – the family unit. As long as the family remained united, as long as the family identified as a family with strong bonds between each member, there was nothing Pharaoh and the Egyptians could do to extinguish the flame of what would eventually become the Eternal people.

May we enjoy and strengthen our family bonds. *Shabbat Shalom*

Dedication - To Dr. Morris & Penny Charytan, for a most special time together, and for our children's path to the creation of a new family. © 2017 The Times of Israel,

The Jerusalem Post

Parashat Shmot: Yes you can!

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

January 19 2017 / Tevet, 21, 5777

Last week, we finished reading the Book of Genesis, the book about the founding fathers, in which we read about creation, the choice of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, about their lives, their hardships, and their journeys. The end of the Book of Genesis told us about Jacob's family settling in Egypt as a family so close to the rulers that they even got a special part of the land to inhabit.

Beginning this week, we read about the generation of the sons – the generation that seemingly made a free fall into the depths of slavery and hard labor, the generation whose babies are cruelly thrown into the Nile, the generation that sighs, screams and begs for God's help.

When people call to God, He hears. He reveals Himself to Moses, who was residing in another country, and gives him a job that he will hold from now until the end of his life: Moses the leader, the redeemer – Moshe Rabeinu.

Moses does not take this appointment lightly. He hesitates and debates, and tries to pass the job onto someone else. He has many reasons to hesitate. He tries to "convince" God in many ways that he is not suitable for this huge role. But the choice is made and Moses embarks on a long route, one that will force him to deal with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and with the nation that was liberated from Egypt but did not easily break free of the psychological shackles of slavery.

One of the reasons Moses has for trying to get out of the job assigned to him is connected to a physical limitation. He says: "I am not a man of words... for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue" (Exodus 4, 10).

We don't know if Moses stuttered or had some other disability that made speaking difficult for him, or perhaps he just lacked oratory talent. What we do know is this: Moses saw himself as someone who could not fulfill the job of leading the nation because that job has always entailed speaking and oration.

God's answer regarding Moses's claim can teach us a lot about limitations and abilities. This was the answer: "Who gave man a mouth, or who makes [one] mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? So now, go! I will be with your mouth..." (Ibid., 11-12).

Who is it who bestows abilities on man or takes them away? God asks Moses this rhetorical question and answers it: It is I, the Lord! You, Moses, were given a job. You were not asked to create abilities for yourself. It is God's job to bequeath to man his abilities. You, a human being, do the job you were given.

Leave to God the concerns about suitable abilities.

But what must man do? He must work toward the right goal having faith that, even if the necessary abilities seem nonexistent right now, he must not worry. Our abilities are greater than they seem. We must have the faith that He who put us in a particular situation gave us the abilities to properly cope with it.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook (1865-1935), chief rabbi of the Land of Israel and among the great Jewish philosophers of the 20th century, said it beautifully. These are words that can help us internalize the fact that our abilities are greater and stronger than it seems.

"Human being, ascend toward the heights, because you are of mighty prowess. You have wings to soar with, wings of mighty eagles. Do not fail them, lest they fail you; seek for them, and they will at once be ready for you." (Orot Hakodesh)

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.

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ravkooktorah.org Rav Kook Torah

Shemot: The Inner Trait of Goodness

When Moses expressed his doubts as to whether the people would believe he was indeed God's messenger, God gave him a sign to prove his authenticity — but a sign which implied displeasure in Moses' lack of faith in his people.

What was the sign? Moses' hand temporarily became white with tzara'at (leprosy). A miraculous sign, to be sure, but tzara'at is an affliction that defiles — a clear indication that Moses was being chastised.

The Sages noted a subtle discrepancy between the Torah's description of Moses' hand turning leprous and its subsequent return to normalcy. The first time, Moses took out his hand "and behold! his hand was leprous like snow" (Ex. 4:6). Then Moses placed his hand inside his robes a second time, and when he had "removed it from his chest, his skin had [already] returned to normal" (Ex. 4:7).

A careful reading of the text indicates that the two transformations occurred differently. The leprosy took hold after Moses removed his hand from his robe; but his hand reverted to its normal color even before he had taken out his hand, while it was still inside his robe. Why should there be a difference between the two?

From here, the Sages concluded, "The Divine trait of tovah [goodness] comes more quickly than the trait of puranut [suffering or punishment]" (Shabbat 97a).

What does this mean? Why should one trait be faster or better than another?

Transcending the Limits of Time

There is in fact an essential difference between these two facets of Divine providence. The attribute of tovah is the very foundation of the world. Divine goodness is the goal of all existence; it is united with the very source of life. For this reason, this trait transcends the restrictions of time and place. Even when it descends into our finite world, a reality bound by time and place, we may still sense its elevated, limitless source.

This is the meaning of the Talmudic statement, "The trait of goodness comes more quickly." The attribute of tovah reveals an inner light, free from the restrictions of time and place. Ezekiel described this phenomenon in his sublime vision of angelic creatures "running and returning, like rapid flashes of lightning" (Ezek. 1:14).

The trait of puranut is a different story. Puranut is not an intrinsic aspect of reality. It is ancillary and transitory. Its value is only to serve the good, to "refine the vessels" so that they will be able to receive the flow of Divine goodness in all of its abundance.

As a result, puranut is subject to the limitations of time and place, and its manifestation is delayed.

The True Nature of Israel

While Divine goodness is integrally connected to the inner essence of life, puranut relates to its superficial aspects. The more we distance ourselves from the true reality, the more our worldview becomes filtered through the lens of puranut. Seeing the world as a place of judgment and suffering is a perception emanating from distortions of the imagination. It does not focus on the true nature of reality, but on its external appearance.

Precisely here — as God taught Moses the true inner nature of Israel, beneath the cloak of outer appearances — the superficiality of puranut was unveiled. Moses' arm only looked leprous after it was exposed to the outside light. In the realm of true essence, there is no place for suffering and harsh punishments; this trait belongs to the realm of superficial appearances.

Moses' hand was restored to its original healthy state as soon as he placed it "inside his chest" indicating that the attribute of goodness reflects the inner essence of reality. It is connected to the root of creation, transcending all limitations of the finite universe. Therefore Divine beneficence is not restricted by the framework of time and "arrives quickly."

(Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. IV, p. 243)

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Ohr Somayach :: Insights into Halacha

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Understanding Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum

For the week ending 2 January 2016 / 21 Tevet 5776

There is a well-known Gemara in Brachos[1] that states: "A person should always complete his [study of the] parsha with the congregation[2] - [by studying] shnayim mikra v'echad targum. Anyone who does this will have long days and years." Learning the text of the weekly parsha twice with the targum (keep reading for explanation) is a segula for long life[3].

What many do not know is that this statement of Chazal is actually codified in halacha[4]!

The Ba'al HaTurim[5] famously comments that this halacha can be gleaned from the first verse in Parshas Shemos: The parsha begins "V'aileh shemos Bnei Yisrael" - "And these are the names of Bnei Yisrael". The Ba'al HaTurim remarks that this passage stands for (roshei teivos) - 'V'adam asher lomed haseder shnayim mikra v'echad targum b'kol naim yashir, yichyeh shanim rabos aruchim l'olam' or "And the person who learns (or sings) the weekly parsha shnayim mikra v'echad targum in a sweet straight voice will live many long years (have an extremely long life)."

Translating 'Targum'

Now that we have seen that such a great reward[6] awaits those who strictly this, there is only one thing left to ascertain: What precisely is the Mitzvah? Obviously, it means to recite the weekly Torah portion twice, plus targum, but what exactly does targum refer to, and what is the purpose of it?

This is actually a dispute among the Rishonim. Several are of the opinion that the purpose of targum is that it is not just a simple translation, but also adds layers of explanation to every word[7]. Consequently, according to this opinion, the purpose of reading the parsha with targum is to learn the Torah in a way that allows us to understand it better. Practically, according to the Tur and Shulchan Aruch, this means that targum here would mean learning the parsha with Rashi's commentary, as it is the best commentary to unlock the pshat (basic understanding) of the Chumash[8].

Others maintain that the halacha is referring to the targum as we know it: Targum Onkelus, as the Gemara in Megillah[9] states that this translation of the Torah was actually given to us by Moshe Rabbeinu[10]. The Rema[11] held that, therefore, reading Targum Onkelus is like reading from the Torah itself! Accordingly, by reading the parsha with its original targum, we are re-presenting the Torah weekly in the same manner as it was given at Har Sinai.

Some opine that this is Rashi's own opinion when it comes to shnayim mikra v'echad targum. The result of this dispute is that Rashi would maintain that Targum Onkelus is preferable, while the Rosh was of the opinion that Rashi's commentary is preferable. That means according to Rashi, ironically, it's possible that one might not even

fulfill his obligation of targum if he learns Rashi's own commentary[12]!

The Shulchan Aruch[13] cites both opinions and rules that one can fulfill his obligation with either one, Targum Onkelus or Rashi. However, he concludes that it is preferable to do both, as that way one can satisfy both interpretations[14].

The Taz[15] explains that if someone does not understand either one, he can read the original Tzennah U'Renna in German (presumably Yiddish) to enable his understanding, and with this he fulfills his targum obligation. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Berurah rule this way as well. In this vein, several contemporary authorities, including Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Moshe Sternbuch, ruled that nowadays one may perform his targum obligation by reading an English translation of Rashi's commentary, if that is the way one best understands it. What time is Mincha?

The Shulchan Aruch[16] rules that the proper time to fulfill this Mitzvah is from the Sunday[17] of the week when a given parsha is read, over the course of the whole week and preferably finishing before the Shabbos day meal[18]. If one has not yet done so, then he has "until Mincha" to finish. [B'dieved one has until Simchas Torah to catch up for the whole year.]

The Shulchan Aruch's enigmatic choice of words led to an interesting dispute among several authorities: What did the Shulchan Aruch mean by "until Mincha"? Some posit that he was referring to a personal Mincha, meaning that a person can finish this Mitzvah up until he himself actually davens Mincha[19]. Others maintain that his intent was until the time of Mincha, meaning Mincha Gedolah, the earliest time that one may daven Mincha[20]. A third approach is that it refers to the time when Mincha is davened in the local shul[21]. Interestingly, there does not seem to be any clear cut consensus on this issue[22].

One Small Step For Man...

Another issue that raises much debate among the halachic decisors is what the proper order and way to do shnayim mikra v'echad targum is, and at which points one may stop; whether pasuk by pasuk, section by section, or parsha by parsha. There does not seem to be a clear consensus on this either.[23] Although for many, to clear a time-block to do shnayim mikra at once may be difficult, it might be a good idea to follow the Mishna Berurah's[24] advice and employ the Vilna Gaon's method of immediately after one's daily Shacharis, doing a small part every day (i.e. on Sunday do up to Sheini; on Monday up to Shlishi, etc.). By following this technique one will have finished this Mitzvah by Shabbos, every week.

Just Do It!

Many contemporary authorities are at a loss to explain the perceived lackadaisicalness that many have concerning this Mitzvah. These Gedolim, including Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, and Rav Ovadia Yosef, stressed its significance[25], and decried the fact that it seems to have fallen into disuse, with several averring that there is even a Mitzvah of chinuch for a parent to teach shnayim mikra's importance to his children[26]! So, although there is halachic discussion as to what the proper order and way to fulfill this Mitzvah is, one shouldn't lose sight of the forest for the trees; the most essential point is that one should actually make the effort to do it. Who would willingly want to turn down a promise by the Gemara for an extremely long life?!

This article was written L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh Yeshiva Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben Yechezkel Shraga, R' Chaim Baruch Yehuda ben Dovid Tzvi, L'Refuah Sheleimah for R' Shlomo Yoel ben Chaya Leah, Rina Geulah bas Dreiza Liba, and L'zechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad! For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu.

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http://ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/.

[1] Gemara Brachos 8a - 8b, in the statement by Rav Huna ben Rabbi Yehuda in the name of Rabbi Ami. [2] The Sha'arim Metzuyanim B'Halacha (vol. 2, 72, 25), citing Sefer HaPardes L'Rashi (99) and Rav Yosef Engel's Gilyonei

HaShas (Brachos 8a), explains that the reason the Gemara adds to complete shnayim mikra 'im haTzibbur' is that the minhag in the times of the Rishonim, and possibly dating back to the Amoraim, was that after davening, the entire congregation would stay in shul and recite shnayim mikra v'echad targum! [3] Interestingly, and although it is not the actual halachah [see Shulchan Aruch and Rema (Orach Chaim 285, 7; who conclude that even so there are those who are noheg to do so; citing the Mordechai on Brachos - Halachos Ketanos 968, and Terumas HaDeshen vol. 1, 23 & vol. 2, 170), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 13), Taamei Minhagim (pg. 180, 346), and Shu"t Igros Moshe (Orach Chaim vol. 3, 40)], nonetheless, there are decisors who extend the obligation of shnayim mikra to include the weekly haftara [see Magen Avraham (ad loc. 12; citing the Knesses HaGedolah), Shlah (Maseches Shabbos, Perek Torah Ohr, 22; cited in Pischei Teshuva ad loc. 9), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (72, 11), and Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parshas Lech Lecha 11)] and the special maf'ir of the Shabbos, for example the Arba Parshiyos - Shekalim, Zachor, Parah and HaChodesh [Magen Avraham (ibid.), Ben Ish Chai (ibid.); see also Shu"t Divrei Moshe (Orach Chaim 12), quoting several earlier authorities; this was known to be the Terumas Hadeshen's personal minhag as well - see Yalkut Yosef (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 685, par. Parshas HaChodesh 9)]. [4] Rambam (Hilchos Tefilla Ch. 13, 25), Tur & Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 285, 1). The Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 2) posits that this is a takkana from Moshe Rabbeinu! See Shu"t Maharsham (vol.1, 213 s.v. ulam) who states that although it is not technically a "chiyuv gamur" like reading the Torah, it has since been equated to the status of "chiyuv". The Maharal M'Prague (Nesivos Olam, Nesiv HaAvodah Ch. 13), expounding the significance of shnayim mikra, explains that it is meant as a weekly commemoration of the giving of the Torah, which was first given over to Klal Yisrael at Har Sinai, repeated over at the Ohel Moed, and a third time at Arvos Moav. At Arvos Moav the Torah was explained in 70 languages to ensure that each person understood the Torah in his own language. At the time, the language most of Klal Yisrael spoke then was Targum. Therefore, the enactment of shnayim mikra v'echad targum, as the targum is meant to serve as a 'Biur HaTorah'. [5] Ba'al HaTurim in his commentary to Shemos (Ch. 1, 1). The Levush (Orach Chaim 285, 1) and Pri Megadim (ad loc Mishbetzos Zahav 1) write similarly (with slight variations) that this passage alludes to this Mitzvah, "V'chayev Adam likros (or lehashleem) haparsha shnayim mikra v'echad targum", and conclude "v'zeh chayavim kol Bnei Yisrael". See also the Chida's Chomas Anoch (beginning of Parshas Shemos, brought in Toras HaChida to Parshas Shemos, 8) who credits this allusion to Rabbeinu Efraim, and gives a Kabbalistic explanation to its meaning, and its relevance to Parshas Shemos. [Thanks are due to R' Yitzchak Botton for showing me this source.] It is also cited by Rav Chaim Fala'ji in his Kaf Hachaim (27). See also Rabbi Elchanan Shoff's recent sefer Birchasa V'Shirasa (on Maseches Brachos pg. 73, s.v. shnayim) who cites a variation of this statement found in Midrash Rebbi David HaNaggid (a grandson of the Rambam). [6] See Kaf Hachaim (Orach Chaim 285, 32) who cites many other rewards for those who do shnayim mikra v'echad targum faithfully. [7] See commentary of Tosafos and the Rosh on this Gemara, as well as the Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim 285, 2). [8] Tur, Beis Yosef, Shulchan Aruch, Taz (Orach Chaim 285, 2), Shlah (Maseches Shabbos, Ner Mitzva 15); see also the Chafetz Chaim's Likutei Ma'amrim (Ch. 5). The Chasam Sofer (Shu"t vol. 6, 61) used to stress the importance of additionally learning the parsha with the Ramban's commentary [9] Gemara Megillah 3a. See there further on the importance of Targum Onkelus and Targum Yonason. [10] Beis Yosef (ibid), quoting the Smag in the name of Rav Notranoni Gaon. See also Biur HaGr"a (ad loc. 2), Pri Megadim (ad loc Mishbetzos Zahav 1 s.v. hataam, who explains this based on the words Ba'er Heitiv), and Biur Halacha (ad loc s.v. targum). [11] Shu"t Rema (127 - 130), based on Tosafos in Bava Kamma (83a s.v. lashon). This is a famous dispute the Rema had with Rav Shmuel Yehuda Katzenellenbogen, as to Tosafos's intent with his statement that 'The Torah spoke in Aramaic'. [12] See Rabbi Yosef Meir Radner's recent sefer Nachlas Mayim (vol. 3, Al Sugyos HaShas B'Inyanei HaMoadim, Ch. 34) at length. [13] Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 285, 2) as does the Tur. Explained at length in Biur Halacha (ad loc. s.v. targum). [14] Regarding whether one can fulfill his Targum obligation with Targum Yonason, Rav Asher Weiss (Shu"t Minchas Asher vol. 1, 13, 4) maintains that indeed one does (even though it is probable that Targum Yonason al haTorah is not really the one referred to in the Gemara - see the Chida's Sheim Gedolim, Maareches HaSeforim 96), as it would be considered similar to reading Rashi's pshat, as it explains the pesukim as well as adds chiddushim. Nevertheless, he concludes that it is still preferable to stick to Targum Onkelus, as Chazal intended. However, others, including Rav Chaim Kanievsky, are quoted (see Rabbi Yaakov Skoczylas's recent Kuntress Ohel Yaakov on Shnayim Mikra pg. 17 - 18, footnote 36) as holding that one is not yotzei shnayim mikra with Targum Yonason. [15] Taz (Orach Chaim 285, 2), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (72, 11), Mishnah Berurah (285, 5). Rav Moshe Feinstein's opinion is cited in sefer Yagel Yaakov (pg. 208, quoting his son Rav Dovid Feinstein); Rav Moshe Sternbuch's is found in Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos (vol. 1, 261, s.v. v'hiskanti). [16] Orach Chaim 285, 3 & 4, based on Tosafos and the Rosh (ibid). [17] Although the Rema in Darchei Moshe

(*ibid*, based on the Kol Bo 37) mentions that this truly means Sunday [see also *Pri Megadim* (ad loc Eshel Avraham 5)], nevertheless, the *Mishnah Berurah* (ad loc 7, and *Shaar HaTziyun* 12) and *Kaf Hachaim* (ad loc 24), citing many *Rishonim*, rule that this really means the preceding *Shabbos* after *Mincha*, when the next week's *parsha* is already read. However, the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (*Orach Chaim* 285, 5) and *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (72, 11) rule that optimally one should wait until Sunday to start the next week's *shnayim mikra*. Additionally, the *Birur Halacha* (*Orach Chaim* 285, 25) cites many other *Rishonim* who hold that one may not start until Sunday. See also *Shu"t Minchas Chein* (vol. 2, *Orach Chaim* 17), who concludes that *lechatchila* one should wait until Sunday to start *shnayim mikra*, however, *b'dieved* if one already started on *Shabbos* after *Mincha*, he would certainly be *yotzei*. [18] Most authorities understand this to mean the *Shabbos* Lunch meal (*Chayei Adam*, *Shabbos* Ch. 7, 9; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav Orach Chaim* 285, 5; *Aruch Hashulchan* ad loc 8; *Mishnah Berurah*, 9 & *Biur Halacha* s.v. *yashlim*); however the *Chazon Ish* (cited in *Orchos Rabbeinu* vol. 3, pg. 234) held that this was referring to *Seudas Shlishis*. There are those who hold that it is preferable to complete *shnayim mikra* on, or at least finish, by Friday - See *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chaim* 285, 5 & 6, quoting the *Shlah*), *Shaarei Teshuva* (ad loc. 1, quoting the *Arizal* and *Rav Chaim Vital*), *Ben Ish Chai* (Year 2, *Parshas Lech Lecha* 11), and *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 8 & 9 and *Biur Halacha* s.v. *kodeh*). [19] Including *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach* (*Halichos Shlomo*, *Tefilla* Ch. 12, 35) and *Rav Chaim Kanievsky* (cited in *Halichos Chaim* vol. 1, pg. 95, 278). [20] Including the *Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasa* (vol. 2, 42, footnote 218) and possibly *Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv* (see *Shgiyos Mi Yavin* vol. 2, 40, footnote 9; although some report his opinion as *Mincha Ketana*). This is also the *mashmaos* of the *Mishnah Berurah* (above, 10). [21] This is the opinion of *Rav Chaim Na'eh* (*Ketzos Hashulchan* 72, *Badei Hashulchan* 7). [22] See *Mv"R Rav Yosef Yitzchak Lerner's* award-winning *sefer Shgiyos Mi Yavin* (vol. 2, 40, 2& 3). [23] See the major commentaries to the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 285), including the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Aruch Hashulchan*, *Mishnah Berurah* (who concludes that '*d'avid k'mar avid u'd'avid k'mar avid*') and *Kaf Hachaim*, as well as *Emes L'Yaakov on Tur and Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 285), and his introduction to *Emes L'Yaakov al HaTorah*. See also *Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer* (vol. 16, 18), *Shu"t Ba'er Moshe* (vol. 8, 3), *Shu"t Rivevos Efraim* (vol. 5, 216), *Shu"t Shevet HaLevi* (vol. 7, 33, 1), *Chut Shani* (*Shabbos* vol. 4, pg. 115, 2), and *Orchos Rabbeinu* (vol. 1, pg. 123). [24] *Mishnah Berurah* (ad loc 8), quoting *Maaseh Rav* (59). Although the *Aruch Hashulchan* (ad loc 4) writes that there is no reason to separate *shnayim mikra* by *aliyos*, nonetheless, see *Derech Sicha* (from *Rav Chaim Kanievsky*, page 2) who commends this *mehalech*. It is well known that *Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l* would use this method of performing *shnayim mikra*, daily prior to the 6:30 A.M. *Shacharis* in his *shul* (see *Gadol HaDor* pg. 48). [25] *Rav Moshe Feinstein* (*Shu"t Igros Moshe*, *Orach Chaim* 5, 17), *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach* (*Halichos Shlomo on Tefillah* Ch. 12, 36 7 footnote

106), *Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner* (*Shu"t Shevet HaLevi* vol. 8, 46) and *Rav Moshe Sternbuch* (*Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos* vol. 1, 261). See also *Shu"t Kinyan Torah B'Halacha* (vol. 6, 22). *Rav Ovadia Yosef*, aside for what he wrote in *Shu"t Yechaveh Daas* (vol. 2, 37), dedicated his broadcasted weekly *shiur* several years ago to exhort the masses to perform this weekly *Mitzvah*. See also *Rav Chaim Falaj'i's Kaf Hachaim* (27, 3) and *Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa* (Ch. 42, 57). In fact, around a century ago, the *Minchas Elazar* (*Shu"t* vol. 1, 26, in the footnote), in a quite telling comment addressing the *Rema's* statement (*Yoreh Deah* 361, 1) that generally speaking everyone nowadays is in the category of someone who 'reads and learns (*Torah*)', remarked that in his day this was certainly true; as 'who doesn't sit in *shul* over *Shabbos* and recite *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*?' [26] Including *Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner* (*Shu"t Shevet HaLevi* *ibid*, s.v. *pshita*), *Rav Moshe Sternbuch* (*Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos* *ibid*, s.v. *ulinyan*), and *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach* (*Halichos Shlomo*, *Tefilla* Ch. 12, 36). *Rav Ovadia Yosef* (*Shu"t Yechaveh Daas* *ibid*, s.v. *u'v'siyum*) exhorts schools to teach children the *Taamei HaMikra* (*trop*); that way when they do the *Mitzvah* of *shnayim mikra* they will be able to fulfill it in the optimal manner. *Chinuch* for *shnayim mikra* would not include a daughter, as a woman is technically exempt from the *Mitzvah* of *Torah* study, and therefore also from this *Mitzvah* [see *Shu"t Ba'er Sarim* (vol. 7, 52, 10), *Shu"t Mishna Halachos* (vol. 6, 60), *Shu"t Rivevos Efraim* (vol. 6, 115, 35), *Shu"t Mishnas Yosef* (vol. 6, 15), *Chut Shani on Hilchos Shabbos* (vol. 4, pg. 215), *Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa* (Ch. 42, 60), and *Yalkut Yosef* (*Otzar Dinim L'Isha U'lvas* Ch. 5, 3)]. On the topic of women being exempt from *targum* in general, see *Aruch Hashulchan* (*Orach Chaim* 282, 11). However, since *shnayim mikra* is part of the *Mitzvah* of *Torah* study, *Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky* (*Emes L'Yaakov on Tur and Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 285, footnote 308) ruled that a boy who becomes *Bar Mitzvah* in the middle of the year does not have to repeat the *Parshiyos* that he read *shnayim mikra* as a *kattan*, as even a *kattan* still has a *Mitzvah* of *Talmud Torah* (as explained in his *Emes L'Yaakov on Kiddushin* 29b - 30a). Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority. *L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh HaYeshiva - Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben R' Yechezkel Shraga, Rav Yaakov Yeshaya ben R' Boruch Yehuda, and l'zchus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam and her children for a yeshua teikef u'miyad!*

In dedication of Mr. Emilio Goldstein ע"ה