

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Shmos 5772

Mazal Tov !!!

Mazal Tov to Jay Goldstein on celebrating your aufroof. May Hashem bless you and Sari with a long and happy life together.

Jerusalem Post :: Friday, January 13, 2012

LOCKED OUT :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Last week the latch to our formidable front gate broke so that we could not enter or leave our building by the usual method of ingress and egress. Being resourceful people - otherwise why would we be living in Jerusalem - all of us living in the building developed an alternate way to gain access to our homes and to the street.

We used a circuitous route by entering or leaving through the parking lot gate, though we were forced to leave that open at all time.

It is a queasy feeling to be locked out of one's own dwelling and neighborhood. It also represented to me the crux of the current contempts regarding Charedi society here in Israel. Basically put, both the Charedim and the rest of Israeli society were very satisfied until now with the status quo, meaning that Charedim were locked out of meaningful participation in general Israeli life.

They were to be kept in their study halls and neighborhoods, subsidized to the hilt by a benign but destructive welfare system, with their educational programs supported minimally and grudgingly by the state as long as they agreed to be locked out of the general community in Israel.

For various reasons, which I will not now detail, the leaders and rabbis of the Charedi public acquiesced to this eventually unsustainable situation and for decades this became the norm - being locked out - as far as Charedi and general Israeli societies were concerned.

But this arrangement was doomed to collapse because of the demographic growth of the Charedi community. With government austerity measures that could no longer support the necessary level of subsidies and welfare to that community, this new generation of Charedim were no longer willing to be permanently denied personal advancement and economic independence.

The situation began to change over a decade ago when government grants to large families were severely diminished. This led to a decline in the birth rate among the Israeli Arab population but the Charedi birth rate remained unaffected. The Charedim have had to expand their neighborhoods and to move to cities where they never before appeared in major numbers. New programs such as Nachal Charedi - Charedim serving in the Israeli army - Charedi colleges and universities for women, and job training, especially in computer related fields, for Charedi men, all began to make an impact both on Charedi and general Israeli society.

To put it mildly, the Charedim did not feel welcome at all in their foray into general Israeli society. Parts of that society were determined to keep them locked out and not even to accommodate them with an alternate path 'through the parking lot gate' so to speak.

In effect the op-ed writers in Haaretz and other anti-Charedi media have said: "You can only enter our society, serve in our army, or hold a job in our economy if you will change your appearance, your life style and eventually your beliefs and traditions." Since this is an unreasonable, unfair, anti-democratic and spiteful demand, the Charedim rightfully reacted negatively to its tone and message. Yet the Charedim continue to use side paths to enter Israeli society and this has caused panic in certain circles in Israeli life

The government follows a contradictory set of policies regarding the integration of Charedim in the general society of Israel. It builds Charedi only cities such as Beitar Ilit and then complains that the Charedim want to live only amongst themselves. It states that it wants Charedim to serve in the defense forces and then the defense forces create crises and conditions that render it to be well nigh impossible to serve. What in the world does the defense of the country have to do with ordering male soldiers to attend gatherings with women singing?

Why should Charedi men entering the workforce find such hostility amongst their co-workers and the commercial world generally? And why should the misdeeds of certain Charedim - of which there are unfortunately manifold examples - be used to tarnish an entire group and society - and in fact religion and Judaism itself?

I have written before about the failings of the leadership and society of the Charedim and this is no apologia for its sometimes self-destructive behavior. But is it not the policy of good government and sane society to refuse to correct those faults. It is necessary to accommodate changes in attitude and perception that will facilitate inclusion and not permanent exclusion? No one feels comfortable at being locked out of one's own home and rightful place in society.

Shabat shalom.

Weekly Parsha :: SHEMOT :: Rabbi Berel Wein

We find many instances in the Torah where strangers, seemingly bystanders who are unconnected to the main characters and events of the narrative, play a pivotal and decisive role in the unfolding of the story. In a sense, they become the catalyst for all that occurs later.

The escaped refugee who comes to tell Avraham about the capture of Lot, the man who finds Yosef wandering lost in the fields in search of his brothers are but examples of this recurring theme throughout biblical narrative. In this week's parsha the daughter of the Pharaoh plays this unknowing role in Jewish history and world civilization.

Going down to the Nile with her maidservants she spies the small floating crib of the infant Moshe and she reaches out for it before the crocodiles can get to it. She thereupon sees the crying infant and even though the baby is from the Jewish slaves she takes pity upon him and secures a wet nurse for him and eventually brings him home to the palace where she raises him as her son.

And out of this strange and unlikely sequence of events, the great Moshe emerges to eventually lead the Jewish slaves out of Egyptian bondage and to bring them to Torah and eternity at the revelation at Mount Sinai. And though it is certainly God that oversees the unfolding of all human scenarios, it is through human beings making choices and decisions and behaving according to those choices that the story of humankind continues to unfold.

Nothing compelled the Pharaoh's daughter to be compassionate towards a defenseless Jewish child in danger. It was her choice and out of that choice the fate of all humanity is allowed to take a positive turn.

The tradition of the Jews is that this daughter of the Pharaoh was named Batya - the daughter of God Himself, so to speak. She is remembered in that her name has been given to myriad Jewish women over the thousands of years of Jewish existence. The continuing custom of naming Jewish women after her expresses the gratitude of the Jews for her life saving act and her human compassion.

The Talmud teaches us that the crib floating in the river was seemingly out of her reach and yet she stretched forth her hand to attempt to bring it to her. When human beings do all that they can for a noble cause or kind deed then many times Heaven takes over. Her hand somehow became elongated sufficiently to bring the crib into her reach and the baby's salvation.

Again, it is this almost mystical combination of human choice and Heaven's guidance that accomplishes this forward thrust in the story of humankind. And the Torah emphasizes that it was not sufficient for Batya to temporarily save the infant from death but that she pursued the matter of the child's welfare to the utmost, finally raising him as her son in the royal palace of the Pharaoh.

Many times we do good and compassionate deeds but we do them partially not really completing the task. The Talmud teaches us that "If one begins a mitzvah we say to him: 'Complete it.'" Batya's immortality is assured

amongst all of Israel for her complete and voluntary act of compassion, goodness and mercy.
Shabat shalom.

TORAH WEEKLY—Parshat Shmot

For the week ending 14 January 2012 / 18 Tevet 5772

from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

INSIGHTS

Kvelling

“And these are the names of the children of Yisrael.” (1:1)

Imagine a grandmother sitting with a stack of photos of her grandchildren. She takes out the pictures after breakfast and leafs through them, reciting the names of each of her beloved treasures, one by one.

After lunch she has a nap, and then, well, she takes out her photos again and recites their names again.

And last thing at night, out come the pictures for a last time, kissing them and calling each of them by name.

The name of the book of Exodus in Hebrew is “Shemot”, The Book of Names.

It starts with a list of the names of the children of Yaakov.

Even though the Torah had already detailed the names of Yaakov’s children in their lifetimes, the Torah lists their names again here after their passing from the world, to show how dear they are to G-d.

Because something that is dear and highly-prized is repeated and re-examined many times.

Like the photos of a doting granny.

The children of Yisrael are likened to the stars. Just as G-d counts the stars and calls them by name when they come out, and again when they pass from the world and are gathered in, similarly he counts the children of Israel both when they enter this world and when they are gathered in.

We should remember that since we are compared to the stars we must emulate the stars. Just as the purpose of the stars is to radiate light to the darkest and most distant corner of the universe, so too it is the job of the Jewish People to radiate spiritual light to the most benighted corners of the world.

Soul Food

“Every son that will be born - into the river shall you throw him!” (1:22)

E-Diets.com, Fat Loss ‘4’ Idiots, The South Beach diet, The Scarsdale Diet, The Atkins Diet, The Mediterranean diet, The Blood Type Diet, The Negative calorie diet, Weight Watchers, Macrobiotic, Vegans, Vegetarians, Fruitetarians, Breathetarians.

Never before in history have there been so many opinions as to what we should and should not eat.

Apart from their physical benefits, many of today’s diets also focus on the purported spiritual benefits of eating and refraining from certain kinds of foods and food mixtures.

The Jewish People, however, have had their own spiritual diet for well over three thousand years. The Torah describes which foods bring us to a clearer contact with G-d and which foods distance us. It also describes foods that are not in themselves deleterious to our spirituality but are damaging when combined, like milk and meat.

In this week’s Torah portion, the Egyptians mercilessly cast Jewish babies into the river. The Midrash describes that the river brought all of those little Jewish children to desert lands and ejected them on the shore. There the Divine Presence nurtured them. G-d commanded the rock on one side of these babies to produce honey, and He commanded the rock on the other side to give forth oil and nurse the infants.

Later, at the parting of the sea at Yam Suf, it was these same children who recognized G-d and cried out, “This is my G-d and I will glorify Him!”

When we take care to feed our children only kosher food we help them to ingest a spirituality that will one day enable them to recognize G-d in a world where He is almost invisible.

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

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Penim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Parshas Shemos

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the first was Shifrah and the name of the second was Puah. (1:15)

Jewish enslavement did not occur overnight. The Egyptians could not have controlled the Jews had the Jews not willingly given up their sense of dignity and their sense of pride, essentially becoming "honorary Egyptians." Horav Tzvi Elimelech, zl, m'Dinov, explains that Pharaoh knew that the Egyptian midwives were not going to listen to his order to kill the Jewish male babies. Their high moral values would not have permitted them to commit such a heinous act. In that case, why did he bother?

The Torah tells us that the names of these women were Shifrah and Puah. Rashi teaches that they were none other than the mother/daughter team of Yocheved and Miriam, who just happened to be the mother and sister of Moshe and Aharon. Pharaoh knew that these women were too Jewish to comply with his murderous demands. It was, therefore, necessary to weaken their defenses. He had hoped that giving them Egyptian names would slowly assimilate them into Egyptian society. They would no longer feel like outcasts. They would become "one" with the Egyptians. This was Pharaoh's error. The women did not accept their goyish names. They retained their names, Yocheved and Miriam, regardless of what Pharaoh was calling them.

This tiny step for an individual Jew has been transformed into one large step for Judaism. The closer one gets to the goyim, the more he distances himself from Judaism: a gradual erosion of one's value system; a lessening of his commitment; a decrease in his ethical behavior. At first, it might seem to be entertaining. Regrettably, it is playing with the devil. A Jew's small increments of acculturation add up to larger and more emphatic assimilation, until he has strayed too far and has become too different to seek an avenue of return.

When Yosef ascended to the Egyptian monarchy, Pharaoh changed his name. He knew that this is how it begins. He plotted to initiate a few more not-so-subtle changes, like an Egyptian wife, and, before long, Yosef would be fully acculturated. This would lead to his assimilation into Egyptian society and ultimately the extinction of his spirit. Horav Elchonon Wasserman, zl, would say that in Shema Yisrael when the Torah speaks of "turning away" (v'sartem) to follow foreign gods, "turning away" does not mean that a Jew has gone so far as to embrace idols actively. The exhortation not to turn away is even more stringent, for indeed at the moment in which one begins to turn away from Torah, he is already attaching himself to foreign gods.

This is how it all began in Germany. In the eighteenth century, Jews - such as Moses Mendelssohn - craved a relationship with - and recognition from - secular society and its prevalent culture. He sought a way to submerge Judaism into a culture in which secular studies and culture dominated, and religious observance was nothing more than an adjunct to maintaining a separate identity. His creed of, "a Jew at home and a gentile outside," became the clarion call for the early assimilationists.

Haskalah, Enlightenment, was invested with an aura of intellectualism, making it fashionable and desirable. His marked shift from the centrality of Torah began his, v'sartem min ha'derech, "turning away from the path," on the road to complete assimilation. As a result, his disciples, even his own children, eschewed the Torah, apostatizing themselves and drinking from the baptismal font.

We have a mesorah, tradition, that has continued uninterrupted, in a chain that stretches from Har Sinai. Deviating from the words of the Torah, as interpreted by the sages of each and every generation, is the beginning of avodah zarah, idol worship. When Jews lose their self-pride as a result of their spiritual weakness, it results in "turning away" to foreign gods. This spiritual weakness was the backdrop of Orthodoxy in this country prior to, and immediately following, World War II. It was the European Roshei Yeshivah, survivors of the European Holocaust, who reshaped Orthodox thought in America, teaching the people that decisions and actions must

always be contingent upon - and formulated in accordance with - Torah dictate.

The Orthodox community was, regrettably, neither recognized nor respected by the acculturated Jews. Thus, it had very little political and economic clout of its own, which compelled Orthodox Jewry to coalesce with the secular Jewish groups of the time. The gedolim, Torah giants, imbued that generation with a fiery zeal for Torah, charting a different course, setting Torah standards for the schools which they established and inculcating the next generation with a fierce pride in being labeled a Torah Jew. Within a short time, Torah perspective became paramount among Orthodox Jews. With renewed pride, they were able to stand resolute in the face of their adversaries, who correctly perceived the challenge to their decades of religious dominance in this country. We have never looked back.

And it was because the midwives feared G-d that He made them houses. (1:21)

Hashem rewarded the Jewish midwives with "houses." Rashi explains that this is certainly not a reference to bricks and mortar, but rather, to spiritual legacies which are, in fact, houses: the Houses of Kehunah and Leviah, descending from Aharon HaKohen; and the House of Monarchy, descending from David Ha'melech. We wonder why Chazal do not mention Houses of Torah, which have been exemplified by such leaders as Moshe Rabbeinu and Betzalel, architect of the Mishkan, descendant of Miriam HaNeviah.

Horav Eliyahu Mishkovsky, Shlita, notes a similar disparity in Sefer Tehillim (135:19,20), "Bais Aharon, the House of Aharon, blesses Hashem; Bais HaLevi, the House of Levi, blesses Hashem; Yirei Hashem, those who fear Hashem, bless Hashem." Apparently, "those who fear Hashem" do not warrant a "House." Why?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that the term bais, house, intimates something concrete, stable, of an enduring nature; something that will exist forever. Concerning Kehunah, the Priesthood, which is dependent upon pedigree, if the father is a Kohen, so is his son; it can be viewed as eternal. As long as we have fathers and sons, we will have Kohanim. Likewise, Leviim transfer their pedigree from father to son. This is the reason that Kehunah and Leviah are represented by batim, Houses.

Torah, however, is not inherited. Just because one's father is a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, to whom Torah is a way of life, as characterized by his diligence and erudition, it is no indication, certainly no guarantee, that his son will be a scholar.

This is the beauty of Torah: It is available to all who seek it, to all who are willing to apply themselves to its wisdom. Stories abound of illustrious Torah scholars whose roots were, at best, quite ordinary. Their fathers were not roshei yeshiva, rebbeim, Torah leaders. They overcame mediocrity, ascending to the apex of Torah leadership. They were giants who built their own "Houses."

Probably one of the most well-known insights into "lineage" and its value is an anecdote about Horav Meir Yechiel HaLevi Haltzshok, zl, the first Ostrovitzer Rebbe, whose father was a bagel maker. A group of scholars gathered, and all but one, the Ostrovitzer, was a scion of an illustrious lineage. As they went around the table, each Rebbe quoted a dvar Torah in the name of his father. When they finally reached the Ostrovitzer, the mood became slightly tense, since, after all, what could the Rebbe say in the name of his father? The Ostrovitzer's reply has become famous. He said, "My father was a baker, and he taught me a very important lesson: Sometimes a fresh bagel is better than a stale challah."

She opened it and saw him, the child, and behold! A youth was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew boys." (2:6)

What about the infant's cry indicated his Jewish pedigree? Do Jewish children cry differently than gentiles? All babies cry the same - or do they? Horav Mordechai Chaim, zl, m'Slonim posits that all babies do not cry alike. Something is unique and special about the way a Jew cries. A gentile weeps out of desperation, hopelessness, depression and disgust. A Jew's cry is one of hope. A ben Yisrael understands that, even at the moment when everything appears hopeless, it is all a facade. Hashem can turn things around in the flash of a second. His cry is of a temporary nature. At

present, it hurts; at this moment, the situation appears dismal. A Jew knows that even in the worst case scenario, he always has a tomorrow, a future. Some place, somewhere, the Jewish people will continue and endure. Moshe's cry was a cry of hope. He was clearly mi'yaldei ha'Ivrim, from the Jewish children.

Chazal teach us that today, the many gates to Heaven are closed. Well, all - but one. The Shaar Ha'Demaos, Gate of Tears, is still open. When one's prayer is expressed with tearful emotion, his tears penetrate Heaven. The question that glares at us is obvious: If the gates are always open, why bother with a gate? The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, explains that people form two types of tears. For instance, in an orphanage at night, one will not hear a sound. Despite the many young children living there, no one cries. We cry because we expect someone to listen. In an orphanage, no one is there to listen, no one is there to respond to the cries for help.

A Jew has an address for weeping: Hashem. He always listens. We may not necessarily acquiesce to His response, but He listens nonetheless. We cry to Him, and we throw ourselves at His mercy. He listens.

The other type of tears, however, does not effect a response. This is a crying which does not entreat Hashem's help. It is a weeping which implies that, Heaven forbid, we do not believe G-d can help us, or worse, that no one is there. These are the tears of yiush, hopelessness. The Gate of Tears exists to prevent the tears of hopelessness from entering. Such tears have no place in Heaven - or on Earth, for that matter.

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

Although raised amidst the majesty and splendor of Egyptian hierarchy, Moshe Rabbeinu remained the son of Amram and Yocheved. Raised as an Egyptian prince, but cognizant of his Jewish roots, Moshe remained totally committed and sensitive to his Jewish brethren. When he matured, growing up into a position of responsibility, he made it a point to go out and see, to observe the plight of his brethren, to see their suffering and grieve with them. What is meant by "seeing" their suffering? Is it not sufficient simply to be aware of the misery? Does observing it firsthand make a difference?

If we were to go back to Sefer Bereishis, Parashas Vayeira, we note that, when Avraham Avinu had his encounter with the three angels in the guise of Arabs, the Torah (Bereishis 18:2) uses the word, va'yar, "and he saw," twice in one pasuk. "He lifted his eyes and saw. And, behold, three men were standing over him! He perceived, so he ran towards them." What does the second va'yar, "he perceived/saw," add to the pasuk? In his Shaarei Orah, Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, observes that being a giving person is not merely having a kind, compassionate, sensitive heart. It requires the ability to sense an individual's needs, to perceive his hurt, his pain. To qualify as a baal chesed, an individual who performs acts of lovingkindness, one needs to perceive the other person's needs before he comes to your door to ask for assistance. Once the individual has to ask, our act of kindness towards him has been stunted. Asking for help can and does degrade many a person. Often, the asking is more demoralizing than the actual taking.

Chesed is built upon two premises: perception and execution. The benefactor must perceive the need before the beneficiary is compelled to ask. He must then open his wallet, dip into his wherewithal and share with an unfortunate Jew. Horav Yissachar Frand, Shlita, relates an incident which took place concerning the Rosh Yeshivah of Ner Yisrael, Horav Yaakov Weinberg, zl, which supports this idea.

A divorced mother with a family of young children called the Rosh Yeshivah shortly before Succos with a halachic question. She did not have much money - period. The added responsibilities of Yom Tov made her financial burden that much more difficult. Purchasing a succah was prohibitive, but she recognized that a mitzvah is a mitzvah. If she must have a succah, she would find some way to acquire one. Her question was: Since she was a woman and, thus, not obligated in the mitzvah of succah, and her young sons were also not obligated due to their tender ages, did she have to purchase a succah? In addition, as a result of the custody agreement, the boys would only be with her for part of the Festival. What should she do?

The Rosh Yeshivah replied that, based upon the Halachah, her presumption was completely correct. However, since she was an ishah chashuvah, distinguished woman, and this was something of which her children should be acutely aware, it was proper for that reason alone to have a succah. A Jewish home has a succah. An ishah chashuvah makes the home and, as such, should have a succah.

The very next day, a pre-fabricated succah was delivered to her door by an anonymous donor. The woman need not have been a "rocket scientist" to conjecture the identity of this donor. The Rosh Yeshivah perceived a need and acted accordingly.

This story is reminiscent of an episode concerning the Bais HaLevi: A Jew came before the Rav with a Halachic query: Since he could not afford the four cups of wine for the Pesach Seder, could he use milk instead? Halachically, one must use chamar medinah, a national beverage. Was milk a chamar medinah? The next day, the Bais HaLevi sent this man money with which to purchase wine and meat, as well. The Rav figured that if the person was able to drink milk at his Seder, apparently he was having neither chicken nor meat. This gesture indicated that a person should not just think with his heart, but also with his eyes. When we listen carefully to what the individual is not saying, we invariably learn much more about his needs.

And Moshe was shepherding the sheep of Yisro. (3:1)

Chazal teach us that Hashem tests a tzaddik, righteous person, in small areas, the little things, which so many of us gloss over. If the tzaddik passes the test, if he demonstrates an affinity to doing small things, to caring about the "little guy," the fellow whom no one seems to consider important enough to give his time, then the tzaddik can be a manhig, leader, of Klal Yisrael. Two of our greatest leaders stand out in this area, and Chazal underscore their acts of caring about small things.

Moshe Rabbeinu and David Ha'melech were both tested by how they shepherded the sheep entrusted in their care. Moshe ran after a stray sheep in the desert. When he found it, he understood that it was tired and had run away in search of water. Moshe then picked up the sheep and carried it back on his shoulders.

David would give the youngest sheep, the ones with the weakest teeth, the first blades of grass, because that grass was softest and thus easier to chew. He gave the oldest sheep the middle part of the grass, which was more difficult to chew. He reserved the toughest part of the grass for the middle-aged group of sheep, because they were the strongest. The future king of Yisrael related to the sheep, caring about each individual creature.

Both Moshe and David evinced true gadlus, greatness. Horav Shlomo Freifeld, zl, commented, "We often throw around the word gadol in reference to a Torah leader, a great spiritual individual. What really is a gadol? Our view is vertical in the sense that his distinction is based upon his scholarship and erudition. His profound knowledge, his familiarity with Shas, the entire Talmud Bavli, is what makes him rise above everyone."

"Chazal are teaching us that gadlus has to be horizontal as well as vertical! A gadol must be a gadol in every nook and cranny of his life - even in the small things. One who finds it difficult to interact with the "little issues" to deal with what seem insignificant, to be sensitive to the inconsequential, is ill-prepared to accept the title of gadol."

Rav Shlomo was once in an art museum, where he beheld a man copying a beautiful painting. Rav Shlomo said, "Indeed, the man was doing an excellent job of copying the artwork. The flowers in the copy looked exactly like the ones in the portrait. The coloring was stunning and matched perfectly. Indeed, the young artist had performed a yeoman's job of copying the piece of art. Nonetheless, something was missing. It was the small strokes that comprised the subtleties of the painting. These small things made a huge difference."

The Rosh Yeshivah's interpretation provides a profound commentary on his own life. He had a big heart with room for all people, regardless of their personal idiosyncrasies. They were his sheep, and he cared deeply for each one of them. Two addendums to the above. When Moshe followed the young, stray sheep into the wilderness, who was taking care of the rest of the pack? Yes, how did he allow himself to leave the entire flock unattended, while he occupied himself with one single sheep? We suggest

that Moshe was teaching us a lesson. A group is comprised of individuals. A flock of sheep is composed of many single sheep. Each single sheep within the group has great significance. The shepherd who ignores one lone sheep, in effect, ignores the entire group.

Second, I am aware of another aspect to "small things" upon which we should touch. The story is related concerning Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, who was well-known, not only as a brilliant Torah scholar whose encyclopedic knowledge of Shas and Poskim was outstanding, but also as a warm, sensitive individual, who was an extraordinary tzaddik in whom ethics and emotions ran very deep.

One day, he was walking through the streets of Yerushalayim, as usual, with an entourage of students hanging on his every word. They passed a shoe store, which had a tiny pair of baby shoes displayed in the front picture window. The Rosh Yeshivah stared pensively at the shoes for a few moments, then turned to his students and remarked, "The Vilna Gaon cried on his deathbed," he began. "Do you know why the Gaon cried? He regretted leaving a world in which a few simple kopecks can purchase a pair of Tzitzis which can access such incredible merit. Look how easy it is to gain reward in this world! But, in the next world, we have no such opportunities. There, we collect what we have earned. This is why the Gaon cried. It truly is a good reason for expressing emotion.

"Well, I am not the Gaon," continued Rav Chaim. "When I die, I will not weep on my deathbed over a pair of Tzitzis, but I will cry over those baby shoes in the window. To me, they symbolize a mother's love of her children. I will cry because I will be leaving a beautiful world in which mothers love their children with all their hearts. That is why I will cry!"

Rav Chaim teaches us a profound insight into what many may consider inconsequential. Nothing is so diminutive as the individual who views something from Hashem as exiguous. It is all a question of perspective. There are no small things, if it comes from Hashem - only small people with small minds.

For the place upon which you stand is holy ground. (3:5)

Moshe Rabbeinu's curiosity was piqued when he beheld a bush on fire, which continued to burn without being consumed. Upon closer inspection, the phenomenon before his eyes became even stranger. Hashem spoke to Moshe, instructing him to remove his shoes, because he was standing on holy ground. Such was the custom in the Bais HaMikdash, in which even the Kohanim were not permitted to wear shoes. The relationship between man and the Exalted must be unimpeded. One's feet must be planted firmly on the ground. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, explains Hashem's statement to Moshe concerning the exalted sanctity of the ground, "Rather than attempting to find out about a phenomenon that lies beyond your sphere of cognition, understand and devote yourself to the lofty destiny of the ground upon which you already stand."

Many of us are searching for something else, something different, something more challenging, something holier. All of the searching is nothing more than an excuse for not acting directly to address the mission that lies before us. We all have fantasies, but we are not cut out for the implementation of these fantasies. As a result, we end up doing nothing, while ignoring the matter at hand and dreaming about what we could have done.

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, explains this similarly, but from the perspective of another human failing. When an individual is asked why he did not serve Hashem better, stronger, with greater zeal, with a greater application of time, he will often give a slew of standard excuses: "I did not have time"; "I was not born with such great acumen"; "My livelihood is suffering, so I must spend every waking minute scrounging for sustenance"; "If I would be smart, I would study"; "If I were rich, I would have time to study and give charity." It is always, "If I were somewhere else, someone different, under different conditions." These are all excuses. Hashem does not want us to be someone - or somewhere - else. He wants us here and now: "For the ground upon which you stand (now) is holy." Specifically, this ground, this situation, under these circumstances; that is what Hashem asks of us - here and now!

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, makes a similar application concerning the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos 2:5, "Do not say, 'When I am free, I will study,' for

perhaps you will not become free." He explains that, *shema lo tipaneh*, "For perhaps you will not become free," is not a reference to a future occurrence, but rather a description of the individual's frenetic lifestyle. Some people never have time - neither now, nor at a later date. Thus, by virtue of one's lifestyle, he may never have time to learn Torah. This is an intolerable situation, which demands that one learn Torah - now. He should not put it off, because this is exactly what Hashem wants of him. This is his *admas kodesh*, holy ground. His primary challenge in life may, in fact, be to overcome all of his temporary distractions in order to study Torah.

Pinos Tzvaav kedoshim romemei Shakai.

The masters (officers) of His spiritual hosts, those Holy beings, are the ones who praise HaKadosh Baruch Hu as Shakai. Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, explains that only Heavenly angels have the ability to praise Hashem by His Name of Shakai. For they are the ones who comprehend the meaning of this Name. The Name is derived from the fact, *She'amar l'olamo dai*, "He announced to His world: 'Enough!'" Chazal explain that when the universe was created, it continued expanding until Hashem declared, "Dai! Enough!" and halted its further development. It is in this sense that Hashem is called Shakai.

We humans have only a limited perception of Creation. When we view the universe through a telescopic lens, we see what appears to the naked eye to be an ever-expanding universe, with galaxies moving away from each other. We are privy to only a fraction of the universe. Thus, to us, it appears to be expanding, as we see more and more. We are unable to see the completed universe. After Hashem said, "Dai! Enough!" only *melachim*, angels, were able to have this perception. Therefore, only they can praise Hashem as Shakai.

Sponsored l'ilui nishmas ha'isha ha'chashuva Rivka Tova Devora bas R' Chaim Yosef Meir a"h niftar 21 Teves 5760

t.n.tz.v.h. from Menachem Shmuel and Roiza Devora Solomon In memory of Mrs. Toby Salamon a"h

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Shemos The Best of Personalities and the Worst of Personalities

Rashi cites two opinions on the pasuk "And a new King arose who did not know Yosef" [Shmos 1:8]: The first opinion is that it actually was a new administration that arose. The other opinion is that it was the same Pharaoh who knew Yo sef but who had a change of policy and imposed the terrible decree of slavery upon the Jewish people.

Rav Moshe Feinstein asked, "Why should we care about this? What difference did it make to Chazal whether it was a new king or the same king with a new policy?" Rav Moshe points out that there is something to learn from this. According to the opinion that it was a new king -- we can readily understand that a new king will have new policies. We see this all the time in Washington D.C. -- when there is a change of government, there is a change in policy. However the opinion that it is the same king with new policies is teaching us a lesson:

The Torah is showing us the depths to which a human being can sink. Here we have a king who was indebted to his advisor (Yosef) like no other person has ever been indebted. Pharaoh had an advisor that literally saved the entire country. Not only did he save the country, but made it prosperous as well. This very king can turn on the immediate descendants of this advisor and tell them "Sorry, I changed my mind. We have a new policy."

It is important for us to know that this happens. We should not think to ourselves "No one could be so low to do such a thing. No one could be such a snake, such a traitor." The Torah wants to teach us just how ungrateful and unreliable human beings can be. Just look at Pharaoh.

Rabbeinu Bechaye quotes a Medrash on this pasuk: "Whoever denies the favors done for him by his friend will in the end deny the favors done for him by the Almighty." The Medrash derives this principle from Pharaoh, about whom it first says, "who did not know Yosef" and about whom it later says, "Who is G-d?" [Shmos 5:2]

This is a lesson for all of us -- this can happen to a human being. But it gets even worse. There is an example in this week's parsha that is even more egregious than Pharaoh's lack of gratitude.

Moshe went out and saw an Egyptian striking a Jew. Moshe killed the Egyptian who was striking the Jew. The next day, Moshe encountered two Jews fighting and asked the aggressor why he is beating his friend. The aggressor turned to Moshe and asked him "Are you going to kill me like you killed that other guy?" Moshe responded, "I see the matter is known!"

The Medrash says that the Egyptians had a system whereby the Egyptian taskmasters would lord over the Jewish policemen to force them to get the other Jews to do work. The Medrash says that every single morning, at the crack of dawn, the Egyptian taskmasters woke up the Jewish policemen to get the other slaves to start working. This particular Egyptian taskmaster saw that the wife of the policeman he was waking up was a beautiful woman. After he sent the Jewish policeman out of the house, he came back and had relations with the man's wife. It was still before dawn and the woman, in the dark, thought she was having relations with her husband.

When the Jewish policeman came back to his house he noticed the Egyptian leaving. When the Jewish policeman asked his wife if the Egyptian had done anything to her, she admitted that she had relations with him thinking that he was her husband. When the Egyptian realized that the Jew found out what he had done, he started beating him and wanted to kill him.

This is the context of the story in the Torah of the Egyptian beating the Hebrew. Moshe, upon seeing this, knew through Ruach HaKodesh [Divine intuition] what the Egyptian had done to this man's wife and what he was trying to do now to destroy the evidence of his crime. Moshe realized that for the crime of adultery as well as for attempted murder, the Egyptian was deserving of death and therefore Moshe took the law into his own hands in killing him.

The Jewish person who Moshe rescued in this story was named Dassan. The next day, when Moshe went out, he saw this very same Dassan beating up another Jew. Moshe chastised Dassan and said, "You wicked one, why are you hitting your fellow man?" Dassan turned around and taunted Moshe, "Are you going to kill me like you killed the Egyptian?" Dassan then went to the authorities and reported that Moshe Rabbeinu killed an Egyptian taskmaster, getting Moshe in trouble to the extent that he had to run for his life and escape Egypt.

Can we imagine a more ungrateful person than Dassan? Moshe saves his life and he turned around and causes Moshe to have to flee the country!

Pharaoh and Dassan were the "worst of human personalities" -- totally ungrateful to those whom they should have owed a tremendous debt of gratitude.

In contrast, now I will cite an example of the "best of human personalities": Yisro. What is the story with Yisro? Pharaoh called in his most trusted advisors. He called in Bilaam, Iyov, and Yisro among his advisory panel. He asked them to help him solve his 'Jewish Problem': "Come let us take counsel regarding them lest they become more numerous and it may be that if a war will occur, they too may join our enemies, and wage war..." [Shmos 1:10] The advisory panel came up with the "brilliant" idea of throwing all male newborns into the Nile River. Bilaam supported the idea enthusiastically. Iyov kept quiet. Yisro resigned from his advisory capacity. In those days, one could not just resign in protest of the government's policies. That was grounds for having oneself executed. But Yisro felt that after all that Yosef did for Egypt, to now turn on his family like this would be such colossal ingratitude that there was no way he could be a party to it.

What motivated Yisro? He was a "makir tova". He recognized a favor when it was done and he realized the moral responsibility that comes with being the beneficiary of a favor. He understood that one of the most basic ethical traits a person must practice is to be appreciative for what one has received. As a result of this courageous stand on Yisro's part, he merited to marry off his daughter, Tziporah, to Moshe Rabbeinu.

How did Yisro merit getting such a wonderful son-in-law? Moshe Rabbeinu was better than "the best boy in Lakewood". He was better than the best guy in Brisk, the best guy in Mir, the best guy in Ponnevez. He

was the best guy in the world! How did Yisro get him? The answer is revealed in a pasuk in the Torah.

Moshe Rabbeinu came to Midyan. Yisro's daughters were being picked on by the Midyanites. Moshe came to their rescue and Yisro's daughters came home and told their father what happened. Yisro responded with surprise that his daughters let the stranger go after this rescue without inviting him home and offering him a meal. He chastised them for being such ingrates. This was his life -- Hakaras haTov! He could not understand how his daughters could not have picked up on the key attribute of his own personality -- that of being beholden to someone who has done a favor. The daughters explained -- according to the Medrash -- that Moshe was a fugitive from Justice; that he had a price on his head in Egypt.

Nevertheless, Yisro insisted that they owed him a favor after having rescued them from the Midyanites bullying. He ordered his daughters to go back and find the stranger and insist that he come home to eat with them. Moshe Rabbeinu came, sat down for supper, and made a nice impression on Yisro. The rest is history. Yisro said, "I want this man as my son-in-law!" This is a segulah we should all be aware of: One who is "makir tov" [appreciative] will wind up with "the best son-in-law in the history of the world."

Parshas Shmos represents the best of times and the worst of times -- the best of human personalities and the worst of human personalities. It includes the worst ingrates we will ever learn about and on the other hand, one of the most appreciative persons who ever lived.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD
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Person in the Parsha

Rabbi Weinreb's Torah Column, Parshat Shemot

Sponsored in memory of Nathan and Louise Schwartz a"ח

Spiritual Time Management

The two old men couldn't have been more different from each other. Yet they both taught me the identical life lesson.

The first, a cagey old Irishman, was one of my mentors in the postgraduate psychotherapy training program in which I was enrolled many years ago. He wrote quite a few books in his day, but they are all out of print now and nearly forgotten, like so many other wise writings

The other was an aged Rabbi, several of whose Yiddish discourses I was privileged to hear in person. He was but moderately famous in his lifetime, but is much more well-known nowadays because of the popularity of his posthumously published writings.

The lesson was about the importance of time management. Neither of these two elderly gentlemen used that term, which is of relatively recent coinage. Yet their words, while far fewer than the words of the numerous contemporary popular books on the subject of time management, made a lifelong impression upon me.

It was long after my encounter with these elderly gentlemen that I first realized that their lesson was implicit in a verse in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Shemot.

The Irishman, we'll call him Dr. McHugh, was a master psychotherapist with fifty years of experience under his belt. A small group of us gathered in his office every Tuesday evening. We went there not only for his wisdom, but for the warm and comfortable furnishings and splendid view of the city of Washington, D.C.

Dr. McHugh was an existentialist philosophically. He was heavily influenced by his encounters with Martin Buber, and because of this, he felt a special affinity to me, thinking that since Buber and I were both Jewish, we must have had much in common. He wasn't aware that my Judaism was very different from Buber's, but I wasn't about to disabuse him of his assumption.

He was a diligent and persistent teacher and, true to his philosophical perspective, doggedly encouraged us to appreciate the human core of the

patients we were treating. He was convinced that he had a foolproof method of comprehending that human core. "Tell me how the patient uses his time, how he organizes his daily schedule, and I will tell you the secret foundation of his soul."

Dr. McHugh firmly believed that you knew all you needed to know about a person if you knew how he used his time. Or, as he put it, "if he used his time, and how he used it." He would then make his lesson more personal, and would ask, carefully making eye contact with each of us, "How do you busy yourself?"

In the summer following that postgraduate course, I took advantage of the rare opportunity of hearing the ethical discourses, the mussar shmuessen, of the revered Rabbi Elya Lopian. He too spoke of the fundamental importance of one's use of time, and he too, though he did not even know the term, was quite an existentialist.

He began his remarks quietly, almost in a whisper. Gradually his voice reached its crescendo, and when it did he uttered the words I will never forget: "Der velt sagt," he said in Yiddish, "the world says that time is money. But I say time is life!" I was a young man then, but not too young to appreciate the profound meaningfulness of that simple statement. Time is life.

He went on to say that we all allow ourselves to become busy, and busyness detracts from life.

It was quite a few years later that it dawned upon me that the Irish psychiatrist and the Jewish spiritual guide were preceded in their teaching by the 18th century ethicist and mystic, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, known by the initials of his name as the Ramchal. Furthermore, the Ramchal was preceded in antiquity by none other than the Pharaoh himself.

In the second chapter of his widely studied ethical treatise, Mesillat Yesharim, Path of the Upright, Ramchal writes of the tactics of the yetzer, the personification of the evil urge which is buried within each of us:

"A man who goes through life without taking the time to consider his ways is like a blind man who walks along the edge of a river... This is, in fact, one of the cunning artifices of the evil yetzer, who always imposes upon men such strenuous tasks that they have no time left to note wither they are drifting. For he knows that, if they would pay the least attention to their conduct, they would change their ways instantly..."

"This ingenuity is somewhat like that of Pharaoh, who commanded, 'Let the heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein, and let them not regard lying words' (Exodus 5:9). For Pharaoh's purpose was not only to prevent the Israelites from having any leisure to make plans or take counsel against him, but by subjecting them to unceasing toil, to deprive them also of the opportunity to reflect."

To become so busy and have no time to reflect, no time to really live, is bondage. Ramchal's insight into Pharaoh's scheme epitomizes the essential nature of our years of exile in Egypt. To have no time, that is slavery.

How prescient were the words of Rav Elya Lopian. Time is life. And how germane is his teaching for contemporary man, who despite the "time-saving" technological devices which surround him is even busier than those who came before him. Contemporary man has no time for himself, certainly no quality time, and thus no life.

Time is life.

Millennia ago, an Egyptian tyrant knew this secret.

Centuries ago, an Italian Jewish mystic was keenly aware of it.

Decades ago, I learned it from a Gentile existentialist psychiatrist and a gentle and pious rabbi.

It is the secret of spiritual time management, and it is the secret of life. Would that we would learn it today.

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 I am 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 won 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, *Mses*, 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 they, 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-tsiibur*, *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.

Parsha Parables - Parshas Shmos 5772
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore
Stories & Anecdotes that Illuminate the Weekly Torah Portion and Holidays

This week we read about the emergence of Moshe, from Egyptian prince to defender of his people. The turning point, it seems comes when Moshe sees an Egyptian striking a Jew. Moshe defends the Jewish man and kills the Egyptian. The act is noted, and Moshe, afraid of governmental

retribution, flees to Midian. It is there that he meets his wife and tends to Yisro's flock and ultimately meets the Almighty at the burning bush. But I'd like to explore the first part of the saga. The Torah tells us that Moshe, "saw an Egyptian man striking an Ivri man, from his brothers" (Exodus 2:11).

The language is awkward. Why would the Torah say, hitting an Ivri man from his brothers? Whose brothers? Certainly not the Egyptian man's brothers. And if the Torah is referring to Moshe's brother's "his Ivri or Jewish brothers", why is it necessary to say that at all? If the man is an Ivri, surely he is "from his brothers".

The Story

I remember years ago, back in 1973, I was 15 years old, studying in the Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia. The Yeshiva was located in suburban Philadelphia, about a mile from St. Joseph's College and there was basically a peaceful coexistence, at least until one hot summer Friday night.

Let me explain. Every Friday night after the Shabbos meal, there was an unofficial custom for some of the boys to walk off the meal by circling the block. We walked in twos.

Most of us would take the stroll in full sartorial splendor. We wore our ties, jackets and black fedoras, something the Rabbis of the Yeshiva felt was appropriate for budding Talmudic scholars.

It seems, however, that those black hats were the object of either ridicule or desire for some of the St. Joe's students who were also walking in the vicinity. One of them grabbed one of the boys' hats and put it on his head. A group of Yeshiva boys chased them back to the Yeshiva property where one of the older Bais Medrash boys, a young man studying in the college-level program, caught up with the perpetrator. He was quite strong and fearless and earned himself the nickname "Blackjack Friedman." He caught up with one of the college hoodlums and tackled him. We were about to jump on the guy, when his friend jeered at us and screamed, "Hey! It's one on one. Stay out of it."

The college kid got up and the two ended up duking it out on the lawn of the Yeshiva. Instead of defending "Blackjack" and joining the fight, we listened to the command of the other college punk and let the two go at it one on one. We stood there, surrounding the two fighters like spectators at Madison Square Garden cheering for Blackjack, like he would be a professional fighter who would be walking away with a large purse.

The fight was going on for about a few minutes, and fists were flying while we were cheering, when suddenly one of the boys ran into the Bais HaMedrash to rally the troops. Within moments a stream of young men (college aged and not the prototypical puny Yeshiva bochur), ran toward the fight scene. Before they all got a chance to pounce on the perpetrators, the hoodlums realized that they were terribly outnumbered and took off.

I will never forget the shmuz my Rebbe gave us the next day. He chastised us strongly, "How dare you, even as High School boys stand cheering on the sidelines while a Jewish friend is being pummeled. Why did it have to take someone 3-4 minutes to get the older boys to defend their friend? Where were you?"

The Message

The Klei Chemda explains: Perhaps that is what the Torah means, a Jewish man from his brothers. The Egyptian hit an Ivri and no one defended him. Why? Because he knew that the only way he could hit him and get away with it, was if the man was taken "from his brothers". If he was amongst his brothers surely they would have come to his aid. But the Egyptian knew better. The only way you can hit a Jew and get away with it is if the Jew is not with his brothers or amongst his brothers. It is only if he is... hit from his brothers.

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Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion Shemot: Moses Hid His Face

"God's angel appeared to [Moses] in the heart of a fire, in the midst of a thorn-bush. ... Moses hid his face, since he was afraid to look at God." (Ex. 3:2,6)

During Moses' first prophetic revelation, he covered his face, afraid to look directly at this holy sight. Was his response an appropriate display of awe and reverence? Or did it reflect a flaw in Moses' personality, a sign of unwarranted timidity?

This question is the subject of a Talmudic disagreement in Berachot 7a. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha noted that, later on, God would inform Moses, "You will not see My face" (Ex. 33:23). In effect, God told Moses: "When I wanted [at the burning bush], you did not want. Now that you want, I do not want." Moses had missed an extraordinary opportunity when he turned away from the burning bush. Because of his failure to strive for greater enlightenment, at Mount Sinai he would only merit a lesser prophetic vision.

Rabbi Yochanan, on the other hand, argued that Moses' action was praiseworthy. As reward for humbly hiding his face, Moses merited that his face would shine with a brilliant light as he descended from Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:29).

Human Perfection

Rav Kook explained that this Talmudic discussion revolves around a fundamental question regarding our principle aim in life. In what way do we fulfill our potential? How do we achieve perfection?

According to Maimonides, human perfection is attained through the faculties of reason and intellect. Our goal is to gain enlightenment and knowledge of the Divine, through the study of Torah and metaphysics. This is also the viewpoint of Rabbi Yehoshua. By hiding his face at the burning bush, Moses lost a golden opportunity to further his understanding of the spiritual realm. If our fundamental purpose in life is to seek enlightenment, Moses' demonstration of humility was out of place.

The author of *Chovot HaLevavot* ('Duties of the Heart'), however, wrote that our true objective is the perfection of character traits and ethical behavior. This concurs with the opinion of Rabbi Yochanan. What Moses gained in sincere humility and genuine awe of Heaven at the burning bush outweighed any loss of knowledge. Since the overall goal is ethical perfection, Moses' action was proper, and he was justly rewarded with a radiant aura of brilliant light, a reflection of his inner nobility.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 101-102. Adapted from *Ein Eyah* vol. I, p. 32)
Comments and inquiries may be sent to: mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com

Weekly Halacha

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Shenayim Mikra v'Echad Targum

In conjunction with the weekly public reading of the Torah, parashas hashavua, there is a requirement that each individual study the parashah on his own and be familiar with its basic meaning. To achieve this level of mastery, our Sages instituted a parashah review known as shenayim mikra v'echad Targum, "two readings of the text and one of the translation of Onkelos." The text itself must be read twice followed by Onkelos' translation.¹ A G-d-fearing individual should study Rashi's commentary in addition to Targum. If one does not have time for both, however, most poskim agree that Targum takes precedence over Rashi.²

The origin of this mitzvah is unclear but it harks back to ancient times.³ The Levush⁴ writes that the first verse in of this week's parashah conveys a hint (remez) to the mitzvah of shenayim mikra v'echad Targum. The Hebrew letters of the verse וְאֵלֶּיךָ שְׂמִיטָה are an acronym for: וְחַיִּיב אִדָּם לְקִרְוֹת הַפְּרָשָׁה שְׁנַיִם מִקְרָא וְאֶחָד תְּרַגְּמוּ one is obligated to read the text of the parashah twice and Onkelos' translation once. Let us review some of the halachos:

As the word obligated in the remez proves, and as the Shulchan Aruch rules, shenayim mikra v'echad Targum is not just a helpful suggestion; it is a full-fledged obligation. Even a talmid chacham who is

completely immersed in Torah study must fulfill this obligation, his other studies notwithstanding.⁵ In addition, a reward of long life is promised to those who are meticulous in performing this mitzvah.⁶ Women, though, are exempt.⁷

The proper time:

There are four different time slots in which this mitzvah can be fulfilled l'chatchilah. They are listed in order of preference:

1. Doing all three readings on erev Shabbos, or beginning them during the week and finishing them on erev Shabbos.⁸ Mishnah Berurah⁹ rules that one may begin reading the weekly portion immediately after Minchah of the previous Shabbos.
2. Completing the readings before Shacharis Shabbos morning.¹⁰
3. Completing the readings before the Shabbos morning meal.¹¹
4. Completing the readings before Shabbos Minchah.¹²

B'diavad, if one did not finish his readings before Minchah on Shabbos, he may finish them until Tuesday night of the following week. One should complete his readings before beginning the new week's portion.¹³ Some poskim are even more lenient and allow one to make up an incomplete parashah until the next Simchas Torah.¹⁴ Since both of these deadlines are "makeup times," they are not to be relied on l'chatchilah.¹⁵

A mourner during shivah may not read shenayim mikra v'echad Targum, even if he normally reads a segment of the parashah on a daily basis. On Shabbos, however, he may do so,¹⁶ unless his shivah will be over on Shabbos morning, in which case he should delay performing the mitzvah until after he rises from shivah.¹⁷

The proper method:

There are several opinions regarding the method of reciting Shenayim mikra v'echad Targum.¹⁸

* Some prefer that each pasuk be read twice followed by Targum. This was the custom of the Chafetz Chayim.¹⁹

* Some prefer reading one segment of the sidrah (either a parashah pesuchah or stumah or one "story", topic or narrative) twice followed by Targum. This was the custom of the Gra.

* Some read the entire sidrah, repeat it, and then follow it up with the reading of the entire Targum.²⁰

* Rav Y. Kamenetsky suggests a compromise between the views: The first time one should read a segment at a time; the second time he should read each pasuk with its Targum.²¹

Question: Is it permitted to read Targum before mikra?

Discussion: All poskim agree that mikra must be read first. Whether or not the second mikra must also be read before targum is questionable. Mishnah Berurah permits it only b'diavad,²² while others permit it even l'chatchilah.²³ Chazon Ish, reportedly, recited mikra first, followed by Targum and then mikra for the second time.²⁴

When completing the recitation of Targum, the last verse of mikra should be repeated (for a third time), since the final verse to be read should always be from mikra and not from Targum.²⁵

Question: Can one fulfill part of the mitzvah of shenayim mikra by listening to Kerias ha-Torah?

Discussion: While listening to the Torah reading in shul, one may read the text (in a whisper) along with the reader and count it towards one recitation of mikra. If one listened attentively but did not read along with the reader, he should not rely on listening alone to fulfill his mikra obligation. B'diavad, however, some poskim are lenient and consider listening to the reader as having fulfilled one recitation of mikra.²⁶

Some poskim hold that if there are at least ten people paying attention to kerias ha-Torah it is permitted for one to recite shenayim mikra v'echad Targum even if he is reading the mikra not in unison with the reader of the Torah and hence not paying attention to kerias ha-Torah.²⁷ Many other poskim, however, strongly recommend that one not take advantage of this leniency but should rather pay attention to every word of Kerias ha-Torah.²⁸

- 1 The basic explanation for this mitzvah, given by the Levush, is that we should become fluent in the Torah. He does not, however, explain why we need to recite the text twice and the Targum once. See Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:2 and

Emes l'Yaakov al ha-Torah (Mavo, pg. 11) for two original explanations for this mitzvah.

- 2 Sha'arei Teshuvah 285:2; Beir Halachah 285:2, s.v. targum; Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:12; Rav C. Kanievsky (Derech Sichah, pg. 2). See, however, Michtavei Chafetz Chayim, letter 18, where he rules that nowadays we no longer fulfill our obligation by reading Targum; we must substitute Rashi's commentary instead.
- 3 We do not find a reference to it in the Mishnah. The earliest source is the Talmud Berachos 8a. See Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:2 who says that surely it was instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu.
- 4 O.C. 285. See also Ba'al ha-Turim (ha-Maor edition) Shemos 1:1.
- 5 Igros Moshe, O.C. 5:17; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42:57 quoting Bnei Tziyon.
- 6 Berachos 8b.
- 7 Since they are not obligated to learn Torah or to listen to Kerias ha-Torah—see Mishnah Berurah 282:12 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:11—they are also not obligated to prepare for it.
- 8 Mishnah Berurah 285:8. Either of these options is considered a mitzvah min ha-muvchar, the optimal performance of the mitzvah.
- 9 Mishnah Berurah 285:7. [Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 218, understands it to mean Minchah Gedolah - one half hour after midday; see Discussion on Parashas Chayei Sarah]. Note that other poskim rule that the proper time is from Sunday morning only; see Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 285:5; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 72:11.
- 10 Mishnah Berurah 285:9.
- 11 O.C. 285:4. According to some, this time is also considered mitzvah min ha-muvchar.
- 12 O.C. 285:4.
- 13 Ketzos ha-Shulchan 72:9. See Maharsham 1:213 who remains in doubt concerning this issue.
- 14 O.C. 285:4. It must be finished before the reading of Bereishis on Simchas Torah; Kaf ha-Chayim 285:26.
- 15 Mishnah Berurah 285:12.
- 16 Taz and Shach, Y.D. 400:1. He may not, however, study Rashi's commentary, unless he always substitutes Rashi for Onkelos when fulfilling Shenayim Mikra v'eacha Targum; Badei ha-Shulchan 400:15.
- 17 Rav Akiva Eiger, Y.D. 400:1, quoting Peri Megadim. O.C. 285:6.
- 18 See Mishnah Berurah 285:2 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:4-7. All views may be followed, and one may change his method from week to week.
- 19 Reported in Shevet ha-Levi 7:33.
- 20 This method is quoted by Aruch ha-Shulchan, omitted by Mishnah Berurah, and opposed by Rav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted by Rabbi Y. Hoffman).
- 21 See explanation in Emes l'Yaakov, O.C. 285:1.
- 22 Mishnah Berurah 285:6 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 10.
- 23 Aruch ha-Shulchan 285.
- 24 Rav C. Kanievsky (Derech Sichah, pg. 2).
- 25 Magen Avraham 285:8; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 72:11; Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:6. Mishnah Berurah, however, does not quote this.
- 26 See Mishnah Berurah 285:2 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:3, 13.
- 27 O.C. 285:5. See Sha'arei Efraim 4:12, Chayei Adam 31:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 23:8 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:13.
- 28 Mishnah Berurah 285:14 and Beir Halachah, s.v. yachol. See Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:23; 4:40-5. See The Monthly Halachah Discussion, pgs. 204-208 for a comprehensive review of this subject.

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The Significance of Vehu Rachum By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1:

"I was once told that there are places in the long Vehu Rachum prayer that one should stop to wait to hear keriyas haTorah. What are they, and why?"

Question #2:

"Why is the prayer Vehu Rachum recited only on Monday and Thursday?"

Question #3:

"In some shullen that I attend, there is often a bang on a shtender with an announcement that today is the yahrzeit of some great rebbe, and therefore we will skip Tachanun. What is the source for this practice?"

Answer:

Our parsha mentions that when the king of Mitzrayim died, vaye'anchu bnei Yisrael min ha'avodah, vayizaku, vataal shavasam el haElokim, that the Jewish people sighed and cried out, and that their cry for help (shava) rose to Hashem. Three different terms for prayer are mentioned in this verse. Indeed the Hebrew language has almost twenty words to describe different types of prayer. This gives us time to ponder some of the different types of prayer that we have.

What is the significance of the special prayer that begins with the words Vehu Rachum?

Vehu Rachum is the lengthy prayer recited on Monday and Thursday mornings on days when we say Tachanun (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 134:1). There is a very moving story concerning the origin of this prayer. After the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash, a boatload of fleeing Jews was captured by a cruel, anti-Semitic ruler. Discovering that they were Jews, he decreed that he would throw them into a fiery furnace just as Nevuchadnezzar had cast Chananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship idols.

The unfortunate Jews requested thirty days to prepare themselves for their fate. During those days, one of the older Jews dreamt of a pasuk that mentions the word "ki" twice and the word "lo" three times but he could not remember it. A wise elder realized that the pasuk was Ki sa'avor bamayim itcha ani, uvaneharos lo yishtefucha. Ki seleich bemo eish lo sikaveh, velehavah lo sivar boch, "I will be with you when you pass through the water, the rivers will not drown you. When you pass through fire you will not be singed, and flame will not burn you" (Yeshayah 43:2). The elder declared that this was clearly a sign from Hashem that just as they had been saved from the sea, so they would be saved from the conflagration.

After thirty days, the wicked ruler ordered that the huge fire be lit, and the old man entered it first. The fire separated into three sections, and three tzaddikim appeared. The first began to recite a prayer to Hashem beginning with the words Vehu Rachum, ending with the words melech chanun verachum attah. (In most printed editions that I have seen this is the first three paragraphs of the prayer.) The second tzaddik added an additional prayer, beginning with the words Anna melech chanun verachum, again ending with the words melech chanun verachum attah. (In the siddurim, these are the next two paragraphs of the prayer.) The third tzaddik completed the prayer. The fire remained split in three and no Jews were harmed. The prayers recited by all these three tzaddikim is the Vehu Rachum prayer that we recite on Mondays and Thursdays (Kolbo #18).

We can now answer one of the questions asked above:

"I was once told that there are places in the long Vehu Rachum prayer that one should stop to wait to hear keriyas haTorah. What are they, and why?" Presumably, it is preferable to stop, if possible, at one of the places which was originally a break between two tefillos.

Why is this prayer recited on Mondays and Thursdays?

What sets apart these days from the rest of the week?

Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Mount Sinai to receive the second set of luchos on a Thursday, and returned with them forty days later on a Monday. Hashem's decision to give Moshe these luchos clearly implied that the Jewish people were forgiven for the sin of the Golden Calf. As a result, Monday and Thursday became etched into the calendar as days of repentance and Divine favor for the Jewish people. This is why these days are chosen for fasting and special prayers in times of need, such as during a drought or during Bahab, the three fast days observed a few weeks after Pesach and Sukkos.

What is the order after Shemoneh Esrei?

Ashkenazim recite Chapter 6 of Tehillim while "falling Tachanun." After this, they say the prayer Shomer Yisrael while still sitting, and then they begin the prayer Va'anachnu Lo Neida. The first three words, Va'anachnu lo neida, are recited sitting, after which one stands up to recite the rest of

the prayer. On Monday and Thursday mornings, Vehu Rachum is recited while standing before Tachanun is begun.

According to Sefardic (Edot HaMizrach) custom, Shemoneh Esrei is followed by Viduy (confession) and then by the Thirteen Attributes of Hashem's mercy (Hashem, Hashem, Keil, Rachum...). These are both said standing, and then they sit down to recite Chapter 25 of Tehillim, which is Tachanun. (I intend to send out an article explaining the significance and halachos of Tachanun within the next few weeks.) On Monday and Thursday mornings, the Vehu Rachum prayer is recited after the Tachanun.

In nusach Sefard (the custom of those descended from Eastern European Jewry based on Hassidic influence), Shemoneh Esrei is followed by Viduy and by the Thirteen Attributes of Hashem's mercy. These are both said standing, after which one sits down to recite Chapter 6 of Tehillim while "falling Tachanun." This is followed by the prayer "Shomer Yisrael" which is said while still sitting, and then by the prayer "Va'anachnu Lo Neida." On Monday and Thursday mornings, the Vehu Rachum is recited between the Thirteen Attributes and "falling Tachanun."

Is it more important to say Vehu Rachum or to say Tachanun?

What happens if there is insufficient time to recite both Vehu Rachum and the rest of the Tachanun together with the tzibur?

It seems that one should recite Tachanun with the tzibur and "Vehu Rachum" after davening.

It should be noted that the commentaries dispute what is included in the takanah of reciting Vehu Rachum. Some contend that the takanah is to say "Vehu Rachum" while standing (Shulchan Aruch 134:1), whereas others explain that the takanah included only reciting Vehu Rachum, but did not require one to stand (Levush). (They all agree, however, that one should recite Vehu Rachum while standing.)

Vehu Rachum should be treated with the kedusha of the Shemoneh Esrei (Magen Avraham). Therefore, there are those who contend that it should be said quietly (Rama 134:1). However, the Beis Yosef rules that one may say Vehu Rachum aloud, as is the custom of many people.

When do we omit saying Vehu Rachum?

Vehu Rachum is omitted on days that we do not say Tachanun, which is on Yomim Tovim and minor festivals.

The Gemara mentions that Tachanun is not recited on Rosh Chodesh (Bava Metzia 59b) because it is considered a minor Yom Tov (see Shibbolei HaLeket).

Why is Tachanun omitted on Yomim Tovim and minor festivals?

Apparently, since Tachanun is a very serious prayer and a person may become overcome with emotion while reciting it, it was felt that reciting it on these occasions would detract from the day's celebration.

Numerous customs are recorded concerning when Tachanun is omitted. Records of this topic go back over a thousand years. In the time of the Geonim, Rav Amram Gaon's yeshivah recited Tachanun even on Chanukah and Purim, whereas in Rav Hai Gaon's yeshivah they did not (Shu't Rivash #412). There were places in Bavel where the custom was to recite Tachanun on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Shabbos Shuvah (Shu't Rivash #412), something that we would find extremely unusual. Every community should follow its custom.

We omit Tachanun between Yom Kippur and Sukkos because the Beis HaMikdash was completed during these days and there was great celebration (Beis Yosef, quoting Shibbolei HaLeket).

Some communities have adopted the practice of omitting Tachanun on the yahrzeit of a great tzaddik. However, virtually all poskim frown on this practice (Shu't Shoel Umeishiv 5:39; Shu't Yabia Omer 3:11; see Chayei Moshe 131:4:4, quoting the Rebbes of Ger, Satmar and Munkach).

It is an accepted practice not to say Tachanun when a chosson is in attendance during the entire week after his wedding. The Magen Avraham (131:12) rules that we omit Tachanun until exactly a week after the moment he got married. Some contend that the chosson should not deprive people from saying Tachanun and therefore rule that a chosson should not come to shul the entire sheva berachos week (Taz 131:10)! This is the way the Mishnah Berurah rules (131:26).

There is also a dispute as to whether we recite Tachanun when a chosson is present on the day of his wedding before his wedding. The Magen Avraham contends that Tachanun is not said, while the Taz holds that it is. Each community should follow its custom or the psak of its rav.

There are many other dates or special occasions when the accepted practice is to omit Tachanun. However, space does not allow us to explain the reasons for each of these customs.

TALMUDIGEST :: Arachin 2 - 8

For the week ending 14 January 2012 / 18 Tevet 5772

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by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

TRAINING A MINOR - Arachin 2b

Although a minor is exempt from the obligation of fulfilling mitzvot, it is responsibility of his parents to train him in the performance of mitzvot so that he will be aware of what to do once he is a bar mitzvah.

Two examples of this responsibility of chinuch are tzitzit and tefillin.

In regard to tzitzit our Sages ruled that a minor who knows how to properly wrap himself in a tallit is obligated in the mitzvah of tzitzit. If the minor is capable of safeguarding the sanctity of tefillin (by avoiding entering the bathroom while wearing them), his father is obligated to purchase tefillin for him.

Why is the obligation to purchase mentioned only in regard to tefillin and not in regard to tzitzit?

Tosefot offers two answers to this question. One is that the father probably has a tallit already so that there is no need to purchase one. A second approach is that only in regard to something as expensive as tefillin does the term "purchase" apply and not to something so easy to acquire as a tallit.

WHAT THE SAGES SAY

"A government is different than an individual in that it will not withdraw from its intention. As the Sage Shmuel put it, 'If the government intends to uproot a mountain it will carry out its plan'."

The Sage Abaye - Arachin 6a

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