

Shemos | Teves 23 - 29 | January 4 - 10



כל הנערים
Rabbi Fried

-Starts at 6:45-



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עבודתך**

Inside:

The Greatest Praise of All

Rabbi Eli Mansour

A Script Without Credits

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

Crediting Hashem

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

and more...

Shabbos Mevarchim Shvat-

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The Moled will be
Thursday morning
45 minutes and
4 Chalakim
after 8

Rosh Chodesh is Thursday



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This week we bentch Rosh Chodesh Shvat.
The Moled will be Thursday morning 45 minutes and 4 Chalakim after 8.
Rosh Chodesh is Thursday.

Shabbos Zmanim

2023 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 12:30pm-3:00pm

4:23pm Candle lighting	4:33pm Mincha in tent נ	4:33pm Chabad Mincha	4:41pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

6:42am <small>Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20 ↑</small>	8:00am <small>Shachris 2 18 main</small>	9:15am <small>Shachris 3 Tent נ</small>	10:00am <small>Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20 ↑</small>	10:00am <small>Shachris 5 18 main</small>
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2:00pm Pirchei	4:20pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	4:42pm Shkiya	5:22pm Maariv 1	5:27pm Maariv 2
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Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim

Zmanim for the week of Jan 7 - 13

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	7:22am	8:58am	9:42am	10:28am	12:02am	3:44pm	4:43pm
Monday	7:22am	8:58am	9:42am	10:29am	12:02am	3:45pm	4:44pm
Tuesday	7:22am	8:58am	9:42am	10:29am	12:03pm	3:46pm	4:45pm
Wednesday	7:22am	8:58am	9:42am	10:29am	12:03pm	3:47pm	4:46pm
Thursday	7:21am	8:58am	9:42am	10:29am	12:04pm	3:48pm	4:47pm
Friday	7:21am	8:58am	9:42am	10:29am	12:04pm	3:49pm	4:48pm
Shabbos	7:21am	8:59am	9:42am	10:30am	12:05pm	3:50pm	4:49pm

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Like the Stars

Shemos 1:1 “And these are the children of Israel who were coming to Egypt”. Rashi states, “Although Hashem counted them during their lives, by name, He recounts them in their death, to make their endearment known—that they are compared to stars, which he brings out and in by number and by name etc.”

What is the purpose of bringing out the stars by number and name? Generally, a name describes purpose or an assignment of duty, and a number expresses that something is finite, not infinite. But what is the message here? What is the job of the stars, and what's the significance of the fact that for all human purposes, the stars are infinite?

Bereshis (15:5) states in regards to Avraham Avinu “He brought him outside and said, now look down at the heavens and count the stars if you are able to count them”. Clearly the intention of referring to the stars is because they are infinite. Also numbers are infinite because you can always add a zero at the end or a one at the beginning. It's the act of counting that is limited to having what to count.

On a deeper level, the concept of bringing out the stars by number is that although they are inherently beyond number to us, Hashem can bring them out by number. This is the perfect metaphor to describe the essence of the Jewish people in the eyes of Hashem. We are in a quasi-state of nature; on one hand we are within nature, being human and having all the physical limitations. On the other hand, we are above nature that we can survive, a sheep among 70 wolves. In every generation there is an effort to destroy us and Hashem saves us from our enemies. The stars have a number that Hashem counts them every day, but they can't be counted by humans. Just as the stars are untouchable by humans, so too, Am Yisrael, when we do the will of Hashem, we are untouchable by the world.

The stars have names which define their purpose. The spiritual energy that comes to the world passes through the constellations. The constellations are a combination of stars that direct the energy to earth with a definitive objective to enhance humanity. Each Jew has the same objective; to enhance the world with his and her unique abilities. We were chosen to be a light (as a star) onto the world and this is the meaning of us being likened to stars.

Just as the stars have a specific job that they have been programmed to do, we have also a mission that we need to accomplish. Hashem therefore watches over us and is involved in our lives to enable us to accomplish this mission. This is the concept of *hasgacha pratit*, Hashem's personal interaction in our daily lives is a source of love and endearment to us.

In order to achieve success in our mission, we need to attain the quality of the stars. When the two big luminaries were at odds, Hashem made the moon smaller, and the moon was upset. Hashem then introduced the stars to create peace and harmony between the sun and the moon. When we become one that generates peace and harmony, we will be real stars, and our mission possible.



The Kallah

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

In the past we mentioned the Baal Turim comment that the word *Shmos* is *Rashai Taivos* for *Shnaim Mikrah Vechaad Targum*. We expanded on the importance of this obligation and the benefits. We also mentioned that even if you're only starting now there are great benefits and you can make up *Braishis* before Simchas Torah. I want to connect this to our current events with a story that happened to me this last visit to Israel on El Al.

After takeoff, I was preparing the *daf yomi* when I noticed an Israeli-looking young man sitting to my left on the next row. It seemed obvious that he is Jewish, especially that this is El Al, although he was without a *yalmuka*; unfortunately, many times a Jew isn't identifiable as Jewish, but on this flight it wasn't difficult to assume that he was. And my mind began the guilt game: why are you learning and focusing on yourself when your brother is watching junk on the screen and you know his soul is thirsty? And especially now during the war when there is so much unity and secular Jews are waking up to the truth, you can't just sit there and ignore your brother.

Lemaseh, the *yetzer hatov* got the better of me and I got up to say hello. We conversed in Hebrew and then I asked him if I can share with him an idea that I heard from Rav Noach Weinberg z"l. He said "sure." Rav Noach related how he once was explaining to the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir z"l what his plans for *kiruv* are. This was before *kiruv* was popular and mainly was being done by Lubavitch. He said "If I introduce to a *chosson* his beautiful *kallah*, will he say 'no thank you'? Well the Torah is the *kallah* of Klal Yisrael and that is exactly what I plan on doing is to introduce the Torah to the Jews that are not connected to it."

My new friend like the *marshal* and I then shared with him *Mishnayos Pirkai Avos* that I had brought to learn with on the plane. His ability to read Hebrew allowed him to read easily the end of the first Mishna which teaches profound lessons. He agreed that it has much more depth than the video shows he was watching and kept the *sefer* till the end of the flight. We exchanged contacts and hopefully this was his first positive date with his new *kallah*.

The lesson from this is two-fold. Firstly, the Torah is the *kallah* of our *neshama*, and secondly we are all brothers, and we're responsible for sharing the Torah and its insights with each other.

As you learn *shnaim mikrah*, look for the messages that are there for you and what you can share with others.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office
Shabbos Morning – Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan



Announcements at Maariv Before Shmoneh Esrei

Although it is clear that one should not talk between *geula* and *tefillah* – even during *Maariv* – the *Shulchan Aruch* (O”C 236:2) quotes the Rashba that announcing “*Yaaleh V’yavo*” is something needed for the davening and is not a *hefsek*. The *Mishna Berura* adds that not only Rosh Chodesh – which is *Min Hatorah* – or *Tal Umatar* – which if forgotten would require one to *daven* over – is allowed. Even announcing to recite “*Al Hanisim*” is also something needed for the *davening* and does not constitute a *hefsek*.

The *Mateh Moshe* quotes his rebbi, the *Maharshal*, who takes issue with this ruling, and does not allow making any announcements. He writes that it would be preferable to have the *gabai* start davening earlier and say the words “*yaaleh v’yavo*” out loud. This is also the opinion of the *Be’er Heitev* (422:1). The *poskim* point out that this is only something that we allow the *gabai* to do; for others to “make announcements” in the middle of *shmoneh esrei* would be a lack of respect for the *davening*.

Announcing Al Hanisim on Chanuka

This question takes an interesting twist in regards to the *yom tov* of Chanuka. Should the *gabai* announce “*Al Hanisim*” on Chanuka? The *Likutei Mahariach* writes that on the nights of Chanuka, the *minhag* is not to make an announcement. Since the *menorah* is lit in front of the *shul*, everyone is well aware that it is Chanuka, and no reminders are necessary.

The Difference Between Maariv and Shachris

Until now we discussed the rules of *Maariv*, which has

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

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certain leniencies, since davening *Maariv* is considered less of a requirement. When it comes to *Shachris* however, the *Mishna Berura* (*Shaar Hatziun* 236:4) writes, there are no announcements allowed.

Similarly, he writes (*Shaar Hatziun* 236:6) in regards to skipping *shma* and its *brochos* to recite *shmoneh esrei* with the *tzibur*. When it comes to *Maariv* the halacha is that one who walks in late to the *shul* and they are about to start *shmoneh esrei* of *Maariv*, he davens along with them and recites *shma* afterwards, in order to have *tefillah b’tzibur*. (This is only true if there are no other *minyanim* readily available.) This is because at *Maariv*, the importance of *tefillah b’tzibur* takes precedence over connecting *geulah* and *tefillah*. However, at *Shachris*, one cannot skip *shma* and its *brochos*, in order to have *tefillah b’tzibur*, because the importance of connecting *geulah* and *tefillah* at *Shachris* is greater than *davening* with a *minyan*.

Answering Amein After Go'al Yisroel

The *Mechaber* in *Shulchan Aruch* (66:7, 111:1) writes that one who is about to start *shmoneh esrei* at *Shachris* is not allowed to answer *amein* after the *chazzan* recites the *brocha* of *Go'al Yisroel*, since it would be a *hefsek*. The *Rama* disagrees with this ruling and writes that it is not a *hefsek*. What is the right thing to do? The *Mishna Berura* offers a way out of the dilemma, and suggests that one should finish the *brocha* along with the *chazzan*, and then all agree that one does not answer *amein*. In some places the *chazzan* finishes off the *brocha* quietly. Some *poskim* like this idea, and others do not.

In Summary

- The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that the *gabai* can announce “*yaaleh v’yavo*” or the like at *Maariv*, but not at *Shachris*. Others maintain that it is a *hefsek*.
- At *Maariv*, *davening* with the *tzibur* takes precedence over *smichas geula l'tfillah*, but not at *Shachris*.
- There is *machlokes* if one can answer *amein* after *Go'al Yisroel*.

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The Birth of Greatness



Rabbi YY Jacobson

One day, Moses is shepherding his father-in-law's sheep, when suddenly, he witnesses a bush, "burning with a heart of fire," yet the bush is not being consumed, it is not being transformed to ash. Moses says, "Let me turn aside, and see this great vision! Why is the bush not being consumed?"

The Torah describes the following scene:

"G-d saw that Moses turned to see, so He called out to him from amidst the bush. 'Moses! Moses!' And he said: Here I am."

G-d tells Moses that "I have heard the pain and screams of the children of Israel in Egypt, and I have decided to save them." Now it is you, Moses, who I will send to Pharaoh, and you will take my nation out of Egypt. Moses becomes the greatest leader of all times, liberating a people from oppression and giving the world the Torah, paving a road in the jungle of history.

A Turn of the Head

The Rabbis in the Midrash, always sensitive to nuance, focus our attention on the enigmatic words: "G-d saw that Moses turned to see, so He called out to him from amidst the bush." Clearly, G-d called out to Moses only because Moses turned to see the sight of the burning bush. But what exactly did Moses do? What does it mean that he "turned to see?"

On this there is a Midrashic argument Rabbi Yochanan says that Moses walked five steps approaching the burning bush. Reish Lakish says that Moses did not take any steps at all; he simply turned his head to gaze at the bush, and when G-d saw that he turned his head in that direction, he called out to him.

What is the motif behind this strange argument?

The Light Bulb Moment

All biblical tales are not merely historical tales of the past, but contemporary lessons for our own lives. The story of Moses, the most important biblical figure, is no different. It is a timeless blueprint for our own inner journey.

Just like Moses, whose life at this point was slow and tranquil, far away from Pharaoh and the enslaved Israelites, and then suddenly is confronted with his burning bush and a new mission to change the destiny of mankind, we too often find ourselves far away from our destiny. We are living in our own orbit, "shepherding our own flock," minding our own business, in our inner psychological wilderness.

But then, suddenly, we experience a "burning bush," or a "light bulb moment." A fire is ignited in our hearts, a light bulb goes off in our minds. Our G-d within speaks to us about a larger mission in life.

Mark Twain said, "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." It is the day when you suddenly see your full potential and hence your full responsibility to both yourself and those around you. It is a moment of clarity when you know exactly what you are capable of, and what you were created for. It

is when you shoulder full responsibility for your destiny.

But how can I know that the voice calling me is real? How do I know that it is not a fantasy created by an imagined ego, a childish dream, divorced from reality? How do I know that this is not the hallucination of a lunatic, or trauma protecting itself, but my personal call to greatness? Maybe I need to go to a psychiatrist or a therapist instead of returning to Egypt and confronting my Pharaoh.

The answer is when the fire burns and burns, yet never consumes your bush. The light bulb never dims. The voice inside me never falls silent. Then I know that this is not a fantasy, but a mission. My inner fire and secret passion, my 'heart of fire,' can never be extinguished, can never be placated by any alternatives. I can run, but I cannot hide, because the fire will continue to burn inside me.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)

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Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)

Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)

After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

UFARATZTA



How to Deal with Fear

Lomo ha'reiosa lo'am hazeh?

We ask Hashem for *simchas hachayim* in davening: "*Sameiach nefesh avdecha*" – Bring joy to the soul of your servant [Lift up our spirits.] We also ask in davening, "*V'haseir mimenu yagon v'anocho*" – Remove from us sorrow and sighing [Take away our suffering and pain.] However, we should know that a lot of our pain we bring on ourselves, by worrying about what the future will bring. When the truth is that we have the choice and control to spare ourselves of the pain that is caused by what we think about.

A clear proof that we have control to eliminate our worry and fear, is that we have a *mitzvah* not to tremble and fear during battle in war. The *pasuk* [Devarim 20,3] says, "*Al yeirach levavchem*" – Let your heart not be faint, do not be afraid..." The Rambam and the Smag count this as one of the 613 *mitzvos*. It is a known fact that any *mitzvah* given to us by Hashem also comes with our choice, whether to do it, or refrain from doing it. (*Shmonah Prakim L'haRambam Perek Beis*)

[Editor's note: There is no "I was born like that. It's not my fault."]

It is incredible, imagine the horrific things you see in war and yet we have a *mitzvah* not to fear and weaken our hearts. What is one to do if his mind runs scared and is filled with worry by the scenes and real dangers lurking all about him?

[The first step is the knowledge that we can control our fear and worry. Based on the above, if even at war one has a *mitzvah* not to worry, so definitely we can control worrying about our health and business /*parnasa* and children. What we want to know is HOW!] To be continued.

==== *Igros Kodesh Tzemach Tzedek. P19-24. A letter written by the 3rd Chabad Rebbe about the year 1829, to his mechtutan.*

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First Shachris

6:15 am | Tent א

Last Shachris

11:30 am (before chatzos) | Tent ג

First Mincha

12:31 pm (מנחה גדולה) | Tent א

Last Mincha

5:37 pm (60 min after Shkiya) | Tent א

First Maariv

3:50 pm after plag | Tent א

Last Maariv

2:00 am | 18 main

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"Shemos" Went to Mitzrayim with Klal Yisroel

1:1 "ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה, את יעקב איש וביתו באו"

"And these are the names of the children of Yisroel who were coming to Mitzrayim; with Yaakov, each man and his household came." The *posuk* is going to recount the names of Klal Yisroel who went down to Mitzrayim. Why did the Torah say "שמות"? The word, "שמות" – "names" seems to be extra here, for the *posuk* should have said, "ואלה בני ישראל..." – the way the *posuk* is written, it sounds like the "שמות" came down to Mitzrayim, as opposed to people.

We know that the word, "ואלה" means to add on to something already stated. Chazal tell us that the purpose in Klal Yisroel having to go through servitude in Mitzrayim was to purify and prepare them to be *Mekabel* the Torah. The *Zohar Hakodosh* in *Parshas Yisro* says that the Torah is all Names of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The Torah is telling us here that the "שמות" – the names – which refers to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, went down to Mitzrayim with Klal Yisroel. "ואלה" - The Torah is teaching us that the *golus Mitzrayim* was because of the Torah, which is all the Names of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. (While we see words in the Torah, the depth of the letters of the words which see are all the Names of Hakodosh Baruch Hu. When we learn the *Torah hakdoshah*, we are connecting to Hakodosh Baruch Hu.) (דברי ישראל)

Klal Yisroel were about to experience a very difficult time. The servitude in Mitzrayim was intense, and Klal Yisroel was

a beaten down nation. Where would they have the strength to endure the pain, and continue on? Why would they want to live?

The Torah is telling us the answer to these questions – "שמות." The Torah is comprised of the "Names of Hashem." Hakodosh Boruch Hu went down to Mitzrayim with Klal Yisroel. Through the pain and suffering Klal Yisroel experienced, they needed to know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is always with them. The extreme pain and suffering was the medicine needed, the purification process, in order for Klal Yisroel to receive the most precious gift in this world, the *Torah hakdoshah*. Klal Yisroel kept their names; they kept to their roots; and they knew that Hakodosh Boruch Hu was with them. While this was true for the *Golus* in Mitzrayim, it was also true for many other exiles and afflictions that occurred to Klal Yisroel. There were many who went through the greatest atrocities at the hands of the Nazis, *yemach yhemom v'zichrom*. How could it be that there were any Yidin who survived those horrors, and continued their lives as *frum* Jews?!

The answer is that they "kept their names." They knew that Hashem was with them. They may not have understood the reason for the pain they experienced, but they knew that their loving Father, the Ruler of the world, was there with them, ensuring that they only received what was needed. We must strengthen our *emunah* in Hakodosh Boruch Hu, and know that He is always there with us. One should never know from *tza'ar*, though one must work on his *emunah* at all times, so that he knows in the most harrowing times in life, that Hashem is with him. May we be *zoche* to strengthen our *emunah* in Hakodosh Boruch Hu and never let go of it.

Letting in the Light of Geulah

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



Bnei Yisroel journeyed from slavery to freedom. Shepherded by Hashem, they achieved what no nation had achieved before – a close relationship with the Creator of the world. They suffered for hundreds of years until they could stand it no more, and cried out to Hashem – "please save us from this pain!"

Jews worldwide this year are crying out to Hashem to help us change the *matzav* in Eretz Yisroel, may we soon be victorious in battle with minimum injuries and bring back all the hostages.

Hashem asks Moshe via a burning bush, to lead Bnei Yisroel. Moshe has many reasons why he cannot fulfill the request. But first Hashem asks Moshe to remove his shoes, for the ground that he is standing on is holy. It's clear that there is something symbolic here. Shoes represent protection, safety, and the ability to shield ourselves from pain. When we remove our shoes and try to walk – we feel exposed and vulnerable.

Hashem is telling Moshe, "When you think you are protected and have nothing to fear, when you say to yourself, 'Why worry?' I can protect myself from all pain," then you are in trouble. Then you are deep in the *galus*. A *galus* of your own making. There are none so foolish as those who feel that they are in control of everything in their lives."

The *geulah*, the path to ending the *galus* is when our "shoes" come off, when we realize that there is no one beside the Ribbono Shel Olam who can truly protect us. When we make ourselves vulnerable, that's when true redemption begins. It is then that everything starts to change.

No matter what cards we have been dealt, Hashem wants to give us a winning hand in life – we need only to open our eyes to this realization and change our perspective.

A story:

Yossele stood in front of the bulletin board in the hallway of the shul slowly jotting down some names from the big board above into his little notepad. He was eleven years old...and he had a serious stuttering problem. Despite all the therapists his parents had sent him to, the problem seemed to be getting worse by the day.

One of the members of the shul was curious as to what this little boy was writing, and looked over his shoulder. Yossele looked up at him, and said:

"I have a very bad stuttering problem. It takes me a long time to express myself and kids make terrible fun of me. My Rebbi just taught us that someone who is made fun of and does not respond has a power to give others a brocha.

It was then that I decided to take down the names of all the sick people from every shul in my neighborhood, so that every time I am made fun of, I can daven for them to have a yeshuah."

If each one of us would only open up our eyes and realize that like Yossele, the trick is not to have what we want, but to want what we have, what a different world this would be!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

A Script Without Credits

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

The name given to both the new *Sefer* and *Parsha* is “*Shemos*” – “The Book of Names”. Aside from the introductory verse which recalls the names of the twelve tribes, one is struck by the lack of names in this week’s *parsha*; the midwives are not identified by their real names, Amram is referred to as “a man from the house of Levi”, Yocheved is referred to as the daughter of Levi, Moshe is referred to as the “boy” or “youth”, Miriam as “his sister” and Bisya as the daughter of Pharaoh. Why does there appear to be a concerted effort to conceal the identities of the characters in this week’s *parsha*?

Rashi cites the Talmud as saying that Yocheved was one hundred thirty years old when giving birth to Moshe. The Ibn Ezra is perplexed as to why the Torah should highlight the miraculous nature of Sarah giving birth to Yitzchak at the age of ninety, yet make no mention of Yocheved giving birth to Moshe at the age of one hundred thirty.

When she descended to the river to bathe, Bisya, the daughter of Pharaoh saw the basket containing Moshe floating among the reeds of the Nile. According to the Talmud, she extended her arm toward the basket which lay far out of her reach. Bisya’s arm miraculously became elongated so that she was able to reach the basket. If the basket was far from her reach, what could have motivated Bisya to stretch forth her arm? Surely she could not have expected her arm to extend miraculously.

There is a fundamental difference between *Sefer Bereishis* and *Sefer Shemos*; *Bereishis* focuses upon the character development and the actualization of potential of the individuals who supply the genetic basis for the Jewish people, while *Shemos* focuses upon the formation and development of the national Jewish entity. Consequently, *Bereishis* highlights the lives and accomplishments of individuals. In contradistinction, because of the miraculous nature of the events which transpired to create the Jewish corporate entity, *Shemos* downplays individual accomplishments within the formation of the nation.

The formation of the nation follows the blueprint set by Hashem to bring the Jewish corporate entity into existence. Each and every move made by the individuals involved has been carefully and miraculously choreographed by the Almighty. Emphasizing an individual’s accomplishments diminishes Divine involvement in the unfolding events. Therefore, the names of individuals are rarely mentioned in this *parsha*, to create the sense that their actions are preordained by a higher authority.

Since *Sefer Shemos* follows Hashem’s miraculous script, extraordinary events are treated as commonplace. Therefore, no mention is made of Yocheved’s ability to bear a child at the age of one hundred thirty. In *Sefer Bereishis* the accomplishments of the individual are emphasized resulting in the highlighting of Sarah’s ability to bear Yitzchak. Just as the actions of other individuals mentioned in this *parsha* were prompted by Hashem, Pharaoh’s daughter stretched out her hand because it was the will of Hashem that Moshe be saved. She too was a tool in the formation of the Jewish nation.



The Importance of Names

Rabbi Berel Wein

This week we will begin to read the book of Shmot in the synagogue on Shabbat. The book begins with a recording of the names of the tribes of Israel that now came to live in Egypt. What is the reason that the Torah bothers again to repeat the names of the children of Yakov? After all, we all aware of their names from the previous *parshiyot* of the Torah that we read at the conclusion of the book of *Bereishis*. Apparently, the Torah wishes to stress to us the importance of names in Jewish life and tradition. In fact, we will find throughout the balance of the Torah readings of the year, the names of the tribes of Israel repeated many times. So, what is in a name?

Irving Bunim, of blessed memory, would tell a story about a brit milah that he attended. When the rabbi asked the father for the name of the boy, the father responded: “Avraham, Yitzchok, Yakov, David, Shlomo, Yosef.” The rabbi was astounded and asked the father: “why such a string of names?” The father replied: “Rabbi, I am a poor man so the child won’t have much of an inheritance. If he looks like my side of the family, he is not going to be too handsome. If he resembles my wife’s side of the family, he probably won’t be that smart either. So, I decided, let him at least have a good name!”

The tribes of Israel had good names, each one representing loyalty to God and to Jewish greatness. In the long night of Egyptian exile, it would be the fact that they remembered their names – their ancestors, their traditions, their vision of the future – that kept alive their spark of hope for redemption. As long as they remembered their names they were part of the Jewish people and bound to the eternal covenant of being God’s people.

There is a Jewish tradition attributed to the kabbalistic masters that one should recite a verse containing one’s name or the first and last letters of one’s name before stepping back at the conclusion of the silent *Amidah*. This is to allow one to remember one’s name even in the hereafter – apparently even there, remembering our name is important. For in our name lies our soul and self.

That is why Jews always placed great emphasis on naming a child, for in that name there lay the history and past of the family and the hopes and blessings for the newborn’s success – Jewish success – in life. I know of nothing that so deeply touches a family’s nerve system as the naming of a child. Therefore, before embarking on the narrative of Israel in Egypt, the Torah first gives us an understanding of Jewish survival – through our names. There is truly a great deal in our names. For that will be the key to the eventual redemption and exodus of Israel from Egyptian slavery.



The opening of *Sefer Shemos* references the 70 offspring of Yaakov that descended to Mitzrayim. Yet, the actual names specifically mentioned are limited to the eleven sons of Yaakov (Yosef was already situated in Mitzrayim). Rather than rename all of the individuals as appears in Parshas Vayechi, the Torah uses the phrase "And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt; with Jacob, each man and his household came:"

The emphasis at this juncture is twofold. One on the "family" unit. Each of the tribes arrived in Egypt with their respective children (households). Second, each tribe had their own family but the common denominator was that they were tied to Yaakov, not only physically, but in the spiritual arena as well.

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains the significance of the family at this time. As we embark on the second book of the Torah, referred to by the Ramban as "*sefer hagalus v'hageula*" (the book of the exile and exodus), the book that relays the story of the creation of the Jewish nation, we must understand that a nation is comprised of not only individuals, but of families.

Tradition is transmitted from parent to child. In order for a nation to survive, family must serve as its foundation. As the tribes entered galus, they took with them what they learned from their father Yaakov and

transmitted it to their children. Only by combining the strength of each family are we able to build an everlasting nation.

We not only descended to Egypt as families, there is an emphasis on families when we exited as well. The korban Pesach which was sacrificed on the eve of Yitziyas Mitzrayim, had to be eaten together with one's family. The salvation was not merely on an individual level, but for it to be eternal, it had to encompass the family.

It is no coincidence that we refer to a family structure as a "family tree" rather than a family map or chart. A family tree is comprised of many branches – each representing another family unit, yet they are all connected to the same trunk or roots. Essentially, they receive their "nourishment" from the same source, even though they are independent from each other. Each child builds their home based on the *masores*, the morals and principles received from their parents.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains why we compare a *chasan* and *kallah* to "*invey hagefen*", the vines of grapes in a similar manner. Vines, unlike trees cannot stand on their own. They require something upon which to lean. Both the bride and groom should lean on each other and use the lessons they learned from their parents as a foundation upon which to build their *bayis ne'eam b'yisrael!* We may add that families are referred to as "mateh" a stick, perhaps to highlight that they serve as that backbone.

As we begin our journey through *sefer Shemos*, let us utilize this time to fortify our household. To appreciate the unique attributes of each child, while maintaining a cohesive family unit. To avoid the sibling rivalry that permeates the parshiyos in *Sefer Bereshis*. To be able to properly convey the beauty of the Torah and our excitement when engaging in the performance of mitzvos to our children. By transmitting the *masores* to the next generation, we are ensuring the eternal blossoming of the Jewish nation.

PARASHAT SHEMOT: THE GREATEST PRAISE OF ALL

Rabbi Eli Mansour

The Torah in Parashat Shemot tells of the heroism of the midwives of Bnai Yisrael, who defied Pharaoh's edict ordering them to kill all newborn boys among the nation. These midwives are identified by the names "Shifra" and "Pu'a," but the Gemara teaches that in truth, these women were none other than Yocheved and Miriam – the mother and sister of Moshe Rabbenu. They were given these names, the Rabbis explain, in commemoration of their efforts on behalf of the babies they delivered. Not only did they refuse to kill the infants as Pharaoh had ordered, but they did just the opposite – they helped the newborns in any way they could. The name "Shifra," which means "beautiful," alludes to the midwives' work to make the infants healthy and good-looking, and the name "Pu'a" refers to the cooing sound which the midwives made in order to calm the babies and make them happy.

It might seem strange, at first glance, that the Torah chose to refer to Yocheved and Miriam by these names. After all, according to tradition, these women were great spiritual figures, who reached the level of prophecy. A person is eligible for prophecy only after achieving outstanding spiritual heights. If Yocheved and Miriam experienced prophecy, then by definition, they were exceptional spiritual giants. Why, then, would the Torah give them names that commemorated their efforts on behalf of Bnai Yisrael's newborn babies? The names Shifra and Pu'a allude to things like administering medicine,

changing diapers, rocking babies to sleep, and playing with them to keep them relaxed and happy. Why does the Torah choose to refer to Shifra and Pu'a specifically by pointing to these menial tasks, if they were outstanding spiritual figures? Is this not demeaning to women of such stature?

The answer, quite simply, is that no, this is not demeaning at all. The greatest praise that can be given is that somebody cared for and raised children. Whereas modern society belittles the value and importance of motherhood, of devoting oneself to raising and educating children, Judaism regards it as the greatest of all undertakings. The Torah specifically refers to Yocheved and Miriam by these names because their efforts on behalf of the infants of Bnai Yisrael are even more precious than their great achievements as prophets.

We must never find it demeaning to devote time and energy to the sacred task of caring for children. Tasks which contemporary society finds demeaning, such as preparing food, dressing and bathing children, playing with them, changing diapers, and everything else that goes into raising happy, healthy and confident children, are all great achievements. For Jews, the greatest praise is that they succeeded in this role – in the role of raising and caring for their children and preparing the next generation of Torah Jews.



Crediting Hashem

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg



After the word spread that Moshe had killed an Egyptian, Moshe was forced to flee from Egypt, and he arrived in Midyan. There he witnessed the scene of shepherds harassing Yisro's seven daughters at a well. Moshe drove the shepherds away and drew water for the young women's herds.

When Yisro's daughters returned home, they reported to their father what had happened, telling him "An Egyptian man saved us from the hands of the shepherds" (2:19).

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 1:32) raises the question of why Yisro's daughters described Moshe as an איש מצרי – "an Egyptian man." Was this who Moshe was? Did he really dress as an Egyptian?

The Midrash answers by offering a fascinating explanation of this pasuk. After Moshe rescued the women, they started praising him, calling him a hero. Moshe responded, "That Egyptian whom I killed – he saved you." Rather than take credit for rescuing them, Moshe directed their attention to the extraordinary sequence of events that led him to be present at the well so that he could help them. It was only because of the איש מצרי the Egyptian man whom Moshe had observed beating a slave, and whom he then proceeded to kill, that Moshe ended up fleeing to Midyan and was thus in a position to rescue Yisro's daughters from the harassment of the local shepherds. And thus "An Egyptian man saved us from the hands of the shepherds" – the women were saved by the Egyptian man whom Moshe had killed, on account of which he needed to flee to Midyan.

Rav Yisroel Meir Druck derives an important lesson about appreciating Hashem's role in everything we accomplish from the Midrash. So many different things need to fall into place for us to succeed in anything, for us to achieve anything. If we find ourselves in a position to help somebody, or to do something meaningful, we should not take all the credit. We need to open our eyes and appreciate all that Hashem has done to enable us to achieve all that we are able to achieve, all the assistance that He grants, and His having placed us in a position to accomplish the great things that we are privileged to accomplish. We cannot take all the credit for our achievements; we must feel a keen sense of gratitude for all Hashem has done to enable us to do all that we do.

הנהגות ופסקי הגר"ח קנייבסקי



קדיש יתום למי שאינו ליתום

בשבת קודש האחרונה - פרשת ויחי חזק, אירעה שאלה מרתקת שיש לדון בה מכמה היבטים, וטרם נפרוש את השאלה נקדים שמדור זה נכתב רק לעורר לב המעיין ולא לקבוע מסמרות בהלכה למעשה. שליח הציבור שניגש לפני התיבה לתפילת מוסף של שבת, היה אחד הנכדים שהנעים בקולו הערב את התפילה. בסיום חזרת הש"ץ, הוא אמר את ה'קדיש דרבנן' (על ישראל וכו'), ולאחר מכן המשיך לומר 'עלינו לשבח', כמנהג האשכנזים. אלא שבסיומה, הוא טעה והחל לומר בעצמו את הקדיש.

הקדיש שנאמר אחרי עלינו לשבח הוא קדיש יתום, ואותו שליח ציבור אינו יתום ב"ה, והוריו שליט"א חיים לאוי"ט, ומנהג האשכנזים, ובפרט רבינו שליט"א, שמקפידים מאוד שמי שאינו יתום מאחד מהוריו לא יאמר בשום פנים קדיש יתום. באמצע הקדיש החזן 'תפס' את הטעות, אלא שהוא היה נבוך ולא ידע אם עליו לגמור את הקדיש, או להפסיק באמצע.

רבינו, שהבחין מיד בכל הנעשה, שתק ולא התערב בעצמו. סיום הסיפור היה כשאחד מתלמידי החכמים ששהה במקום יעץ לשליח ציבור להמשיך את הקדיש באמירת 'על ישראל', ובכך זה ייהפך לקדיש דרבנן, וקדיש זה, מותר גם למי שאינו יתום לומר, ובכך הסתיימה התקלה המביכה. להנהגה זו של רבינו יש נידון רחב בפוסקים. הרמ"א (או"ח סימן קל"א ס"ב) מתיר לומר קדיש יתום גם למי שאינו כזה, אבל למעשה רבינו שליט"א פוסק להלכה כדעות שלא הסכימו לזה. להרחבת דברים ראה בספר פסקי תשובות ועוד.

מעניני הפרשה

"ושאלה אשה משכנתה... כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלות" (ג, כב) צריך עיון, וכי מה בני ישראל היו זקוקים לשמלות, והרי לבשו בגדים, והבגדים לא בלו, וכמו שכתוב (דברים ח' ד') שמלתך לא בלתה מעליך

ויש לומר, איתא בגמרא בשבת (קי"ג א') שמצווה שלא יהיה מלבוש של שבת כמלבוש של חול, אלא ילבש בגדים אחרים, ולכן הוצרכו לשמלות אחרות, לייחד אותן לשבת.

"ויאמר ה' אל אהרן לך לקראת משה המדבר, ויפגשו בהר האלקים וישק לו" (ד, כז)

כתב הרמ"א (או"ח סימן צ"ח ס"א): אסור לנשק בניו הקטנים בבית הכנסת, כדי לקבע בלבו שאין אהבה כאהבת המקום.

ושאלו את רבנו מהו לנשק ידי חכם בבית הכנסת, כמנהג קהילות רבות? והשיב להתיר כי בזה מראה שאוהב את התורה וחכמיה, ולא מגרע מאהבת המקום.

Kids' Story Shemos

Rabbi Tzvi Abramoff

"What are you doing, Shloimie?" Elimelech asked his little brother. "Why are you mixing your chanukkah neiros with a spoon?"

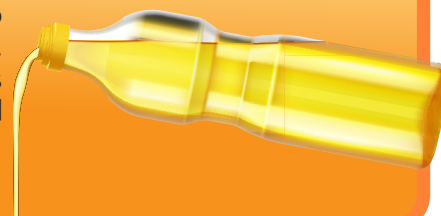
"Mommy told me to add water to the oil and it's not mixing in properly, so I'm trying to mix it with a spoon!" answered Shloimie.

"Oy gevalt!" said Elimelech, "you'll never manage to put oil together with water! They just don't mix!"

Klal Yisrael and the other nations are like oil and water. We just can't mix! B'nei Yisrael thought that the way to

protect themselves in Mitzrayim was to be similar to the Mitzrim. That was a big mistake! They didn't realize that there's no such thing as the Jews mixing with the Goyim.

If we're not using the mitzvos to keep ourselves different, Hashem makes the Goyim hate us as a different way to keep us apart. If we want to get along with the Goyim, the only way is to be as different as we can! (Based on the Beis Halevi)





PAYING OFF A DEBT

Rabbi Pinchas Winston

Moshe returned to G-d and said, "G-d! Why have You done such evil to this people?! Why did You send me?! Because I went to Paroah to speak in Your Name, he has done evil to this people! You have not redeemed this people at all!" (Shemos 5:22)

Understandably, Moshe was upset. He had gone to Paroah, as G-d had commanded him to, and demanded the release of the Jewish people. And on cue, Paroah promptly rejected his plea, and not only didn't free the Jewish people, but even increased their burden. Moshe left Egypt not as the instrument of freedom he had hoped to be, but the cause of increased Jewish suffering! Did he not have cause for complaint, even to G-d?

On the other hand, hadn't G-d warned Moshe that he would fail the first time? If so, then why was Moshe so upset? The answer was, "Reject my plea, yes!" Moshe complained. "But use it as an excuse to make their lives more miserable ... we never spoke about that! You call that redemption?!" Moshe cried out.

"Yes," G-d could have said. "Let me give you an analogy. Let's say, Moshe, you wanted to build a house, but you didn't have enough money to do so. So what are you going to do?"

"Borrow the money somehow, I suppose."

"Right. Now, let's say you wanted to borrow \$20,000 to build that house, and I lent it to you, interest-free of course, to be paid back over 20 years. That's about \$83.33 a month. However, after 10 years of making monthly payments, you decide, 'Enough with these payments! I want out!' What do you have to do? Do you simply stop making the payments?"

"No, that would be stealing. I would have to pay you the balance of whatever I still owed You."

"Exactly, Moshe. Now how much would you have to pay me at that time? Up until then you would have been making monthly payments of \$83.33. But now you still owe me ..."

"Ten thousand dollars ... I would have to pay you back the balance of \$10,000 ..."

"At one time ... right, Moshe?"

"Right, G-d."

"You see Moshe, the Jewish people, to complete the process to nationhood should really stay in Egypt for 400 years in total. However, they're sinking so quickly spiritually that if I leave them in there much longer, there'll be nothing to redeem at the end of the 400 years! But I can't just wipe away the debt ... G-d forbid! That wouldn't be good for them or for creation! So, I have to exact a lump sum from them, now, so that they can go out of Egypt 190 years earlier. In other words, Moshe, don't lose heart. You will see, and so will they, that you were an instrument for freedom after all, though you have triggered increased suffering in the meantime.

Having heard this, Moshe had no trouble following G-d's every instruction *b'simcha*, from that point onward.



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JOKES

Do You Do Windows?

Channa texts her husband Chaim on a cold winter morning: "Windows frozen."

Chaim texts back: "Pour some lukewarm water over it."

Channa texts back 5 minutes later: "Computer completely messed up now."

Do You Know Who I Am?

It was the final examination for an introductory Biology course at the local university. Like many such freshman courses, it was designed to weed out new students, having over 500 students in the class!

The examination was two hours long, and exam booklets were provided. The professor was very strict and told the class that any exam that was not on his desk in exactly two hours would not be accepted and the student would fail. Half of an hour into the exam, a student came rushing in and asked the professor for an exam booklet.

"You're not going to have time to finish this," the professor stated sarcastically as he handed the student a booklet.

"Yes I will," replied the student. He then took a seat and began writing. After two hours, the professor called for the exams, and the students filed up and handed them in. All except the late student, who continued writing. An hour later, the last student came up to the professor who was sitting at his desk preparing for his next class. He attempted to put his exam on the stack of exam booklets already there.

"No you don't, I'm not going to accept that. It's late."

The student looked incredulous and angry.

"Do you know who I am?"

"No, as a matter of fact I don't," replied the professor with an air of sarcasm in his voice.

"Do you know who

I am?" the student asked again in a louder voice.

"No, and I don't care," replied the professor with an air of superiority.

"Good," replied the student, who quickly lifted the stack of completed exams, stuffed his in the middle, and walked out of the room.



Scared

You know the text message I received from a heavy smoker acquaintance: "I just read an article on the dangers of heavy smoking. It scared the daylight out of me. So that's it: after today . . . no more reading!"

The Fundraiser

A doctor, a lawyer, and a fundraiser are walking along a beach when they discover an old lamp. They rub the lamp and a genie comes out and says he will grant each of them a wish.

The doctor asks to have more money than he can ever spend. Poof. He has an endless stream of income hooked up to his bank account. He runs off elated.

Next is the lawyer. He says, "Yes, give me that too! Endless money in my bank account." Poof. It happens. The lawyer runs off elated.

"And what is your wish?" the genie asks the fundraiser. "If it's not too much trouble," says the fundraiser, "I'd like the business cards of the doctor and the lawyer?"

Two Phases

In a military class the professor asked the students, "What is the difference between an engagement and a battle?"

No one in the group offered any answer. The professor was frustrated. "Didn't anyone read the material in the book?" he thundered.

Finally, one guy said that he knew the answer.

"An engagement is the thing that came before marriage," he said, "while the battle is what followed it."



The trouble with having an open mind, of course, is that people will insist on coming along and trying to put things in it.



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