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845-200-3720
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Rabbi Daniel Coren
RABBI
914-645-4199
rabbidac@gmail.com

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Rosh Kollel, Kollel Boker &
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845-200-3719
rabbisheiner@18forshay.com

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BET EDITOR: bet@18forshay.com
Shalom Mashbaum EDITOR
Aliza Estrin GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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Shabbos Zmanim CANDLE LIGHTING 4:28 PM

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SHABBOS

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	6:40 AM	8:00 AM	9:15 AM	10:00 AM	10:30 AM
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	2:00 PM	4:25 PM	4:47 PM	5:27 PM	5:37 PM

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12 MIN. before shkia

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RABBI DANIEL COREN



A Time for Change

Parshas Shmos marks the beginning of the six auspicious weeks known as *Shovevim*, a time designated by the Ari z"l as especially powerful for *tikkun hanefesh*, the rectification of the soul. These weeks are deeply connected to *Galus Mitzrayim*, with *Mitzrayim* representing not only a historical exile, but each individual's *meitzarim*, their personal limitations and spiritual constrictions from which they must strive to break free.

This idea of constriction versus freedom appears again in the Jewish calendar. The three weeks of calamity are called *Bain Mameitzarim*, literally "between the constrictions." In contrast, Pesach is called *תּוֹרַת חֵירוּתֵנוּ*, the time of our freedom. Yet this freedom is not merely physical. At its core, Pesach celebrates the freedom of the soul from the limitations imposed by the body.

Recently, I visited the ancient city of Marrakesh, Morocco, a place steeped in over a thousand years of Jewish history. In other parts of Morocco, there are even *kevarim* dating back to the time of the *churban* of the

Second Beis Hamikdash. I went to the famous *beis hachayim* in the old Jewish quarter, a vast cemetery containing hundreds of *kevarim*, including those of many holy *tzaddikim* from the 16th century.

My first visit was to the *kever* of Rav Yitzchak Deluya, a great *tzaddik* about whom many stories of miracles are told. He was close with Rav Yosef Karo, the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, and the rebbe of several other great *tzaddikim* buried there, including Rav Shlomo Amar and Rav Avraham Azulai, among others.

Standing there, I reflected on why we refer to a cemetery as a *beis hachayim*, a house of the living. While one might dismiss this as a euphemism, the truth may be quite the opposite. As long as a person lives a life dominated by bodily limitation, constricting the soul's true desires, he is, in a sense, more dead than alive. A *beis hachayim* is the ultimate place of life because the souls resting there are truly free. In that sense, they are more alive than those who come to visit and pray. When a person leaves this world, the soul is finally unbound, experiencing real freedom.

This brings us back to *Shovevim* and *Parshas Shmos*, which share the same central theme. *Parshas Shmos* begins the transformation of the Jewish people from the elevated spiritual state they experienced during Yaakov Avinu's final 17 years, described by the *pasuk* "Vayechi Yaakov," a true state of life, as the *Zohar* explains, into the constriction of *Mitzrayim*. This exile is described as *galus hadibur*, a constriction of speech, and by extension, a constriction of the soul itself.

The weeks of *Shovevim*, beginning with *Shmos*, present us with an opportunity to reclaim true freedom. Through fasting, self-refinement, and even the smallest shifts, choosing the desires of the soul over those of the body, we can effect changes that resonate throughout the rest of the year and bring us closer to a life of true vitality.

May we merit to take full advantage of these days of light, and may we be *zocheh* to see Mashiach speedily, today.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR
in R' Coren's office
every Sunday at 8:00 PM

RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER



Gan HaTorah THE BURNING BUSH

ויאמר משה אסרה נא ואראה את המראה הגדול הזה, מדוע לא יבער הסנה
"And Moshe said: Let me turn aside now and see this great sight – why will the bush not be burned?" The Torah tells us that Moshe noticed that this thornbush was "burning" yet was not being consumed. Why does the Torah then tell us that Moshe wanted to understand why the bush was not being consumed?

(*Chagigah* 27a) The fire of Gehinnom has no power over Torah scholars. This can be derived from a *kal v'chomer* from the salamander, a creature created out of fire that is immune to its effects and whose blood is fireproof. If a salamander, which is merely a product of fire, and nevertheless, when one anoints their body with its blood, fire has no power over them, all the more so, fire should not have any power over Torah scholars, whose entire bodies are fire, as it says in *Yirmiyahu* 23:29 "הלא כה דברי כאש" – "Surely My words are as fire, Hashem says." The words of the *Torah Hakdoshah* become part of the *talmidei chachomim's* very

beings, a part of their bodies, and thus they are immune to fire. We learn out a great *mussar* from this, that just as fire has no power over a salamander according to nature, so too, a *talmid chachom*, who is infused with the *Torah Hakdoshah*, which is complete fire, is also saved according to the rules of nature, and it is not called a miracle.

This is similar to the Maharsha who says that when one is *mispallel* for something, if it occurs, it does not decrease his *zechuyos*, for it is considered part of the natural order of the world that *tefillah* helps. Similarly here, part of the natural order of the world is that the Torah supersedes everything, for the world receives its *chiyus* from the Torah. It is the true life source of the world. Thus, one is naturally saved from evil in the *zechus* of Torah, and it does not diminish his *zechuyos*. (חתם סופר)

Moshe Rabbeinu noticed that there was something miraculous occurring. This was the test for Moshe – would he take notice of the burning bush not being consumed? In order to see Hashem, one must see what is around to see Hashem, one must see what is around to him. While nature is also Hashem, there are

times that Hashem performs actions that are not part of nature, and it is always done for a reason. Moshe noticed the burning bush not being consumed, and he wanted to understand it.

Hakadosh Boruch Hu is life itself, and He infuses *chiyus*, life, into the world every moment. If *chas v'shalom*, Hashem would stop, the world would turn into nothingness. Moshe was exceedingly humble, and he recognized that there is a Creator of the world, and He can do as He pleases. Moshe Rabbeinu knew that Hashem, the Torah, and Klal Yisroel are one. The message of the burning bush was that no matter what, Klal Yisroel or the *Torah Hakdoshah* would never be consumed. Torah is like a fire, a fire that burns but does not consume. It is a fire that does not need *gashmiyus* as fuel for life, for it is life itself. Moshe was being told that he was going to be the messenger to take Klal Yisroel out of *Mitzrayim* so that they could receive this most precious gift, the *Torah Hakdoshah*, and no harm would come to him. The Torah protects us from everything – for Torah is life itself.

RABBI YY JACOBSON



Two Conditions of Exile

Exile for the Jewish people consists of two dynamics: oppression from without and erosion from within. The former might be more painful, but the latter is more lethal. Hence, the first and emblematic Jewish leader, Moses, as he is growing into his position, is immediately confronted with these two problems that would define the Jewish condition in exile.

On the first and most basic level, Jewish exile, from Egypt till today, has been defined by the “Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man.” Persecution, abuse, oppression, expulsion, random torture and murders, even genocide, have been the fate of the Jewish people from Pharaoh to Hitler. In almost every generation, the Jew needed to reckon with the tragedy of baseless Jewish hatred that never ceased to claim innocent lives. The Jew turns this way and that way and sees “that there is no man” who cares enough. The world—the UN—will remain silent.

Yet with all of its crude and incomprehensible brutality, Moses finds a solution to this crisis. “He struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.” Moses taught us that there are times when we have no choice but to take up arms and strike the enemy in order to protect innocent lives. The use of moral violence must always be the last resort, but when all other attempts fail, righteous might is the only response to immoral violence.

THE SECOND DAY

On the second day, after Moses rescued his fellow Jew from the external enemy, he was confronted with a new challenge: a Jew fighting a Jew. One would think that the solution to this problem would be easier than the former one. After all, this is only a quarrel between Jews themselves. Yet, astoundingly, in this incident, Moses fails. His attempt to create reconciliation gets thrown back at him. In a typical Jewish response, Moses is asked: “Who appointed you as a prince and leader over us?” Who do you think you are to tell me how to behave?

Anti-Semitism is dangerous, very dangerous, and we need much determination and courage to combat it wherever and whenever it rears its ugly head. Yet since the enemy is clearly defined, we have no problem identifying the target and eliminating it, either through peaceful methods or through justified conflict. However, discord within the Jewish people – the strife and mistrust between communities as well as the animosity within communities and families – is a silent disease that eats away at our core and does not allow us to experience liberation. At first it does not seem so destructive; its negative potency shows up only in time, especially in moments of crisis when we need each other most, but the trust has been eroded.

There have been only three periods of

Jewish political sovereignty in four thousand years. Two ended in, and because of, internal dissension. The third age of sovereignty began in 1948, and already, Israeli society is dangerously fragmented. The democratic process alone does not guarantee the existence of the body politic; it needs also some shared culture and identity—a shared sense of purpose and destiny. Israel at war is defined by its enemies. Israel in pursuit of peace is less easily defined and may erode from within.

When Moses, more than three millennia ago, observed the Jew fighting the Jew, he grew frightened. Moses knew that as long as unity prevailed among his people, no force from without could crush them. But the moment they became fragmented within, their future was dim.

Today, we are still in exile, and we suffer from both problems. There are the people who wish to strike us down, and there is conflict within our own ranks. And, just as it was with Moses, it seems at times that the former challenge is easier to address than the latter. It is easier to gain a Jewish consensus concerning Iran and Hamas than it is to create peace in a family and community. Will we, at least this time around, have the courage to dull our egos, open our hearts, and embrace each of our brothers and sisters with unconditional love?

SHIUR SCHEDULE

MONDAY & THURSDAY Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)
SHABBOS Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)
PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.

UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ



THE CHABAD REBBES

Founder and first Rebbe of Chabad: The Alter Rebbe, Admor Schneior Zalman, *Baal-HaTanya v'Shulchon Aruch Harav*. Lived in Liorna and then in Liadi.

The second Rebbe of Chabad: The Mitteler Rebbe, Admor Dov Ber, the eldest son of the Alter Rebbe. After the passing of the Alter Rebbe and Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, the Mitteler Rebbe moved the Chabad headquarters to the town of Lubavitch [Lubawitz], Russia, in 1813. The Chabad movement was centered there for 102 years.

The third Chabad Rebbe: The Tzemach Tzedek, Admor Menachem Mendel, son-in-law of the Mitteler Rebbe and maternal grandson of the Alter Rebbe

The fourth Chabad Rebbe: The Maharash, Admor Shmuel, youngest son of the Tzemach Tzedek

The fifth Chabad Rebbe: The Rebbe Rashab, Admor Shalom Dov Ber, younger son of the Maharash. In 1915, during World War I, the Rashab moved to Rostov, Russia.

The sixth Chabad Rebbe: The Frierdiker Rebbe, Admor Yosef Yitzchok, also called by many “the RaYYatz.” Father-in-law of the Rebbe. The Rebbe called the RaYYatz “Der Rebbe, der *shver*,” the Rebbe, the father-in-law. The Frierdiker Rebbe moved to Petersburg, Russia; Riga, Latvia; Otwock [Atvotsk], Warsaw, Poland. In 1940, during World War II, the Frierdiker Rebbe moved the Chabad headquarters to 770 Eastern Parkway, Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY, USA.

The seventh Chabad Rebbe: - *v'chol hash'vi'in chavivin* - The Rebbe, Admor Menachem Mendel, fifth generation, *ben achar ben*, of the Tzemach Tzedek, son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe

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24th of Teves, *Yom Hilula* of the Alter Rebbe

RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



Using Secular Months on Checks

I would like to wrap up the topic of using the secular date in regard to writing the secular date on checks or the like. As we discussed, the Torah requires us to count the months, starting from Nissan, to constantly remember that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim. The Chasam Sofer in *Parshas Bo* writes that using the secular date, which counts the months in a different manner, is a blatant transgression of this mitzvah.

The simple reading of these words gives the implication that the Chasam Sofer was against any manner of using the secular date. However, the Be'air Moshe suggests that the Chasam Sofer was only concerned with using secular numbers for the date. For example, writing 11/10, which means the 10th day of the 11th month, November, is against the mitzvah to count the months from Nissan, which means not to count the months from Tishrei, and certainly not from January.

SECULAR YEARS

The Chasam Sofer, in a *drasha*, decries the custom of those who signed their letters using the Gregorian calendar, which is based on the birth of the Christian god. He writes emphatically that they are thereby denouncing their connection to Hashem and cutting themselves off from His Torah.

The Maharam Shik also concurs with his *rebbe's* disapproval of this practice. He discusses the institution of writing the secular year of the person's birth and death on a *matzeivah*, which began in his time. He asserts that it is a blatant transgression of the prohibition to mention anything affiliated with idol worship, such as using a church as a landmark.

Rav Neiman, Belzer *dayan* of Montreal, has a *teshuvah* in which he discusses if there is any allowance to use the secular date when one is

involved in commerce or the like. He suggests that the prohibition is only when one is dealing with a fellow Jew, but when dealing with non-Jews, there is no problem. He proves this from a document of Rav Akiva Eiger, which was signed in Posen on July 27, 1832. He explains that it was in a legal document for the acquisition of his house, and it is not included in this prohibition.

He also maintains that one can prefix the secular date with the word "*Imisparam*," i.e., according to *their* numbers. By making this disclaimer, one is proclaiming that he is merely using their numbers to count, not that the person considers it to be the actual date, and it will not be a problem. The Be'air Moshe also has another proposal. Instead of writing the year in full, 2023, one should just write it in shorthand, '23. That way, he is not writing the actual year of the birth of their god, which is also something implemented by many.

The Klauzenberger Rebbe, in *Shefa Chaim*, writes that if one has no choice but to use the secular year, he should have in mind the birth of Rabbi Akiva, which was also at that time.

SUMMARY

The Chasam Sofer was against using the secular date, perhaps only when using secular numbers for the date. The Chasam Sofer decries the custom of signing a letter using the Gregorian calendar. The Maharam Shik asserts that writing the secular year on a *matzeivah* is a blatant transgression of the prohibition to mention anything affiliated with idol worship.

Some allow using the secular date when dealing with non-Jews by adding the word "*Imisparam*" or by writing it in shorthand, such as '23.

CHOFETZ CHAIM HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Lashon Hara Dilemma

QUESTION

My whole family got together for a Chanukah party at my parents' house. My siblings and I were all there with our kids, and as always happens when we're together, everyone was telling funny childhood stories. My younger brother said, "Wait! I have the best story! Remember when we were in high school, and we wanted to go up to the country for Shabbos, but we couldn't get a ride?" I sure did remember. We hitchhiked. Then we snuck onto a bus without paying. I certainly didn't want my children to hear this story. "Let's not go there," I said. "It wasn't our best moment. Anyway, I think

it's *loshon hora*." My brother didn't tell the story, but he also insisted that it wasn't *loshon hora* because he was also in the story and didn't look any better than I did. Was he right? — Chanan

ANSWER

Chanan's brother has the mistaken idea that if he looks just as bad in the story as Chanan does, it's not *loshon hora*. However, this is not a consideration in halachah. If the story makes the other person look bad, if he's embarrassed, or his reputation is damaged by the information, the story is *loshon hora*. A person is not allowed to tell a negative story about himself if it also reflects badly on other people who were involved in the episode.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara
Currently: מסכת יומא
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei
Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently : הלכות ניבוד אב ואם

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45 PM
Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR OHRE.EDU

The Importance of a Name

(Based on L'Torah U'I'Moadim by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin)

"And these are the names of the Children of Yisrael that came to Egypt..." (1:1)

There was once a Jew who wanted very much to join a certain golf club. The only problem was that this golf club didn't accept Jews. Undeterred, he changed his name and took every conceivable precaution to conceal his Jewishness. A week after he submitted his application, he was very disappointed to receive a polite but firm rejection from the club. "I don't understand what went wrong," he complained to a friend. "My name doesn't sound Jewish. And on the application form, under where it said 'Religion,' I even wrote 'Gentile!'"

One of the reasons that the Jewish People deserved to be redeemed from Egypt was that they didn't change their names. But why was this considered something so important that it gained them deliverance from Egypt?

The name of a thing defines its essence. When Adam HaRishon gave names to every creature, he understood that creature's individual essence and was able to express this in a name.

Similarly, later in this week's parsha, when Hashem commands Moshe to bring the Jewish People out from Egypt, Moshe says to Hashem, "...They (the Jewish People) will say to me 'What is His (Hashem's) Name?' What shall I answer them?" In other words, if they ask me to define the essence of the Creator – what His name is – what do I answer them? Obviously, Hashem is above all definition. Man can have no idea or concept of the real essence of the Creator. We can only know that there is a Creator. And that is precisely what Hashem answered to Moshe.

"I will be that Which I will be." - My essence is the fact that I exist, I have always existed, and I will always exist. That is My essence. That is My Name.

That's what 'not changing their names' means: The Children of Israel didn't change their essence. They didn't lose their identity. Even in the depths of exile, they never stopped feeling that their essence, their total gestalt, was Jewish. Right at the beginning of the Book of Shemos, the Torah tells us, "These are the names of the Children of Israel..." With these names they came, and with these names they left, their essence and their identity unaltered in any way.

הרב בן ציון סנה



ויעבדו מצרים את בני ישראל בפרך (א, יג).

בחומש שמות מתחילים אנו לקרוא את פרשת גלות מצרים, השיעבוד בחומר ובלבנים ובכל עבודה בשדה, ואת הגאולה המופלאה שבאה בעקבותיה, באותות ומופתים, ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה. והשאלה המתעוררת היא: מדוע, מדוע, לפני שהקדוש ברוך הוא לקחנו לו לעם, לפני שנתן לנו את תורתו והנחילנו את ארץ ישראל, הצריך אותנו לעבוד דרך כור הברזל! במצרים, בית העבדים הנורא? האם לא היה טבעי יותר ונימוח יותר, אילו היו בני ישראל נשארים בארץ ישראל, מתרבים בה, מקבלים את התורה ויורשים את ארצם מבלי לצאת ממנה? לרבינו ה"ב א"ש ח"י זצ"ל יש לכך תשובה בדרך משל, והתשובה נכונה כל כך גם לנו, ולחרוננו!

משל לעשיר, שגידל בביתו יתום, מקטנותו ועד לימי בחרותו. מפיתו אכל ובביתו התגורר, ונחשב כאחד מבני המשפחה האמידה. יום אחד ישב העשיר ואכל בחברת רעייתו, ובא לפניו עני לבקש דבה. חשב לקבל חמישה שקלים, אולי עשרה. הושיט העשיר ידו לכיסו, והוציא שטר בן מאה שקלים. היה לבו טוב עליו, ובפרך נדיבות העניק אותו לעני. התפעל העני מן המתנה הנדיבה והחל להודות ולהלל את העשיר, ברך אותו ברכות עד בלי די. גם בצאתו מן הבית לא פסק לברך, ואף בלכתו ברחוב נשמעו ברכותיו עד לבית העשיר.

אמרה אשת העשיר לבעלה: "ראה נא כמה ברכות קיבלת עבור מאה שקלים. ויתום זה שאנו מגדלים, כבר הוצאנו עליו אלפי שקלים ומעולם לא שמעתי מפיו מלת ברכה ושבח!" חייך העשיר ואמר: "המתניני מעט, ותקבלי תשובה לשאלתך". קרא לאותו יתום, ואמר לו: "שמעני. כל עוד היית ילד רך בשנים, גידלנו אותך בביתנו וכל מחסורך היה עלינו. עתה גדלת והיית לאיש, יכול אתה להרוויח את לחמך בעצמך. צא איפוא מביתי, ודאג לעצמך!" חרד הנער: "עכשיו?!" והעשיר אישר: "עכשיו, ומיד!"

בנוך הבחור, ולא מצא מלים. קד קידה ויצא אל הרחוב. כסף לא היה לו, לא אוכל ולא מקום לינה. ישן בקרן רחוב. קם בבגדים קמוטים, ורעב ללחם. באין ברירה השכיר עצמו לסחוב סלים לעקרנות בית שערך קניות בשוק, וקיבל בשכרו שיירי ירקות. אין לקנא במצבו, ואפשר לשער את דכאונו.

ביום השלישי מצאו אחד ממשרתי העשיר, ואמר לו: "אדוני קורא לך". התייצב הנער בפני העשיר, שהתבונן בפניו הנפולים ובגדיו הקמוטים ואמר: "זוהי אני שהדבר קשה עליך! תוכל לשוב ולהתגורר בביתנו כמקודם". ומיד הורה לערוך את השולחן. ישב הבחור אל הארוחה הראשונה לאחר שלושה ימים. בכל כף שהכניס לפיו הודה ושיבח את בעל הבית מטיבו, ובין מנה ומנה לא פסק להלל ולפאר את העשיר. גחן העשיר ולחש לאשתו: "הרי לך תשובה לשאלה ששאלת... אין אדם מכיר טובה על דבר שנראה לו טבעי ומומן מאליו. אותו עני קיבל דבה שלא חלם עליה והודה עד בלי די. יתום זה רגיל היה לאכול על שולחננו, ולא חשב כלל שיש כאן טובה וחסד. רק כאשר ראה שיתן גם אחרת, ושאינו חייבים לו דבר, מבין הוא עד כמה חייב הוא להכיר טובה!"

כך אמר רבינו ה"ב א"ש ח"י ז"ע. אילו היו בני ישראל משארים בארצם, היו מקבלים את כל הטובות בטבעיות ובאדישות. מה עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא, הורידם למצרים, לבית עבדים, ונוכחו לדעת שמצד עצמם אין להם כלום. ואז, כאשר נגאלו "שירה חדשה שיבחו גאולים", בהכירם לדעת שהכל חסד וחנינה, ועל הכל יש להודות ולהלל! זהו שאמר שרף ישראל מתנה טובה היא, ולא ניתנה אלא על ידי ייסורים. כדי שדע להעריכה בערכה ולהודות על נתינתה! ובכל יום יום, לפני תפילת העמידה, נצטוונו להזכיר את יציאת מצרים ולהסמיכה לתפילה. ומדוע, כדי שמכור בתפילתנו את לקח יציאת מצרים. שדע שכל מה שיש לנו, מתנת שמים הוא. שנשכיל לפקוח עיניים ולראות את חסד ה' על כל צעד ושעל. ולא לחכות לחולי, חלילה, כדי להודות על הבריות. לא לחכות למצוקה, חלילה, כדי להכיר טובה על הרווחה.

ונכונים הדברים גם לגבי דורנו בכלל, הדור שלפני הגאולה. דור, שכל המסגרות מתמוטטות בו, ואין בטחון בשום דבר, יד הברזל של רוסיה התמוטטה. הכלכלה האמריקאית בשפל. התרבות האנושית התגלתה בריקנותה. תמנון הטרור משלה זרועותיו לכל קצו תבל. העולם כולו עומד בפני סימן שאלה, אם לא בפני מבוי סתום. עומדים אנו במצבו של אותו בחור רגע לפני שהוא נקרא חזרה. רגע לפני ההתגלות הגדולה, לפני ההכרה וההכרה: "ראו עתה, כי אני אני הוא!" ואז דע להכיר טובה, על כל החסד שבגאולה! ופסוק מפורש הוא: "הושיענו ה' אליקינו וקבצנו מן הגוים הודות לשם קדשך!"

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RABBI NACHMAN WINKLER



Galut and Geulah

The connection of this week's *haftarah* from *Sefer Yishayahu* (*prakim* 27-28) to the *parasha* is difficult to understand.

HaRav Yehudah Shaviv suggests a number of possible connections, among them the fact that the *haftarah* alludes to the exodus from Egypt some two or three times. And yet, he comments, this very fact adds to the difficulty of finding a connection to the *parasha*. The *haftarah*, although including some *psukim* of criticism and condemnation, is primarily a vision of the yet-to-come redemption. This promise of a glorious future includes the well-known prophecy of how Hashem will sound the great shofar and bring the lost and the wayward back to Yerushalayim to worship G-d there (27, 13). The *parasha*, on the other hand, does not describe the *geulah* but rather the anguish

and oppression of the *galut* in Mitzrayim! Why then the choice to read this *haftarah*?

I would suggest that a key to solving this problem may be found in the latter part of the *haftarah*, that section which condemns the hedonistic behavior of Yehudah, the Southern kingdom. There we find Yishayahu asking the question: "*Et mi yoreh de'ah...?*" - "To whom shall I teach knowledge...or explain my message?" The people, the *navi* claims, are on an almost infantile level, incapable of understanding G-d's message. He therefore concludes that they must be taught "*kav lakav, tzav latzav*," "commandment by commandment, line by line" as a child would be taught.

We often forget that one of the purposes of the Egypt "experience" was that of education. Not simply teaching Pharaoh and the Egyptians of Hashem's existence and His power (remember how Pharaoh

responds to Moshe's initial request by stating, "I do not know G-d"), but also educating Bnai Yisrael as to Who Hashem is and what He wants of them. And this teaching is done one plague by one plague, one mitzvah by one mitzvah, to a nation whose knowledge of G-d was limited, if not almost childish.

It was, perhaps, this point that our ancient scholars saw in the words of Yishayahu that convinced them that this selection was a fitting one for the *parasha* of *Shemot*.

In effect, the *galut* experience is not to be seen as conflicting with the idea of *geulah*. Rather, as the Maharal suggests, *galut* is a necessary experience for our eventual *geulah*.

A lesson so important for us to understand.

RABBI YITZCHAK ADLERSTEIN



All of Us

Based on the Meor Einayim

The core of our exile in Mitzrayim was a *galus* of *da'as*. Not a dimming of our general comprehension or understanding, but of the *da'as* necessary to truly serve Hashem.

True *da'as* is the engine that drives *yirah* and *ahavah*. How could this not be so? When a person fully understands and internalizes that Hashem fills the universe with His *Kavod* – that there is nowhere and nothing devoid of His Being; that He is both the Source of all pleasure that can be conceived and the One who sustains all things – so that if it could be conceived that He would withdraw from His Creation, all things would disappear into a primordial chaos; that His withdrawal even from any of the spiritual worlds would preclude their existence – when a person grasps these things, he will not desire any other pleasure in the universe. He will understand that Hashem Himself is the essence of anything he would desire and comes to desire only Him! He will not make the mistake of taking any pleasure dissociated from the Divine Influence that shines from within it. (Such dissociation is never neutral. It always divides between a person and his Creator.)

Ahavah is described by Chazal as per-

taining to "each and every *middah* that Hashem measures out to you." This is a reflection of the reality that Hashem's supernal light radiates from His infinitude. It seems incongruous with the limitations of this world. Indeed, it is. This existence cannot contain it. It therefore has to come to us through His different *middos*, which restrain and confine His light to forms that are manageable in this world. Each one contracts that light in a different way and mediates it in a manner that is fit for the world that we know.

What determines which *middos* He uses? Largely, it is our *da'as*. Depending on how much *da'as* we have at a given time, He hides more or less of what He is and, conversely, reveals more or less. At some times, it may be through the *middah* of *rachamim*; at others, it might *b'chessed*. Or it could be some other *middah*. These *middos* have enormous impact on practical aspects of our lives. One who loves Hashem will accept whatever *middah* Hashem shows him with joy, understanding that he is being shown exactly what is appropriate for him on his level. He will accept a display of *din* as an exercise of His mercy, thereby transforming it into the latter! Thus, Chazal tell us that *tzaddikim* turn *middas ha'din* into *rachamim*.

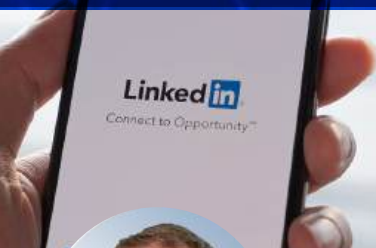
Like Avraham Avinu, each of us have to

be tested. We are made to submit to many *nisyonos*/challenges. The substance of each *nisayon* is removing the connection to Hashem that was enabled previously by a person's *da'as*. His *da'as* then becomes restricted from what it was before. The *nisayon* is navigated successfully when a person can make the right choices based on the imprint his *da'as* left upon him before it was diminished.

In Egypt, our *da'as* was occluded. Just as a shell encases the edible portion, in the infancy of our peoplehood, our *da'as* was encased by a *kelipah*. That *kelipah* was broken with the Exodus, which allowed *da'as* to be activated. (Thin layers of *kelipah* remain, to be removed only in the days of Moshiach.) The process continues throughout time. Evil-doers still find themselves within the *kelipah* and have no true *da'as* at all. They are still locked into the restraints/*metzarim* of Mitzrayim. The rest of us find relief each Pesach from what clouds our *da'as*. Thus, the *geulah* continues. This is what the Haggadah means when it states that it was not just our ancestors whom Hashem redeemed from Egypt, but all of us.

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A Lesson in Chinuch

The *Shulchan Aruch* (Y.D. 81) rules that a Jewish baby should not nurse from a non-Jewish woman if a Jewish woman is available because the milk of a gentile will cause his heart to become impure (מטמא את הלב). The Vilna Gaon zt"l says in the name of the Rashba that this *halachah* is learned out from Moshe Rabbeinu, who refused to nurse from an Egyptian woman because in the future he would speak with the *Shechinah*!

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks: How can this *halachah* apply to all Jewish children if the reason it is forbidden is that Moshe Rabbeinu was a holy child who would later speak face to face with Hashem? Wasn't Moshe different? He answers that from here we learn out a tremendous lesson in *chinuch*. Indeed, EVERY Jewish child has the potential to talk to the *Shechinah*! Every aspect of his upbringing and education should be with the mindset that he can and will one day speak to the *Shechinah*! Who knows, maybe it will be YOUR child who will be the Moshiach! If we always carry this thought in the back of our minds, we will raise our children differently. If we believe that our children are special and holy, we will make every effort to ensure they are sheltered from even the slightest exposure to impurity.

We are living in a world of טומאה. We are surrounded by immorality, indecency, and impropriety. In a split second, with the click of a button, one can fall to the lowest level of impurity. It is a scary world, and the most frightening part is that our children know more than we do! We can hardly attempt to shelter them from dangers that we ourselves are unaware of. We need to see our children as holy, and we need to instill in them a desire to remain pure. We can do this only if we ourselves truly believe in them. Only if we project to them our belief in their potential for greatness will they wish to achieve it. We MUST do whatever we can to protect the purity of our children because they just might be the ones chosen to speak to the *Shechinah*!

Milah in Mitzrayim

ויאמר אליהם מלך מצרים למשה ואהרן תפריעו את העם ממעשיו לנו לסבלתיכם (ה' ד')

The king of Egypt said to them, "Moshe and Aharon, why do you disturb the people from their work? Go to your own burdens!" (5:4)

Rashi explains that Pharaoh's intention by saying, "Go to *your own burdens*" was that since the *Levi'im* were not required to participate in the physical labor, Pharaoh specifically said, "Go to *your own burdens*," meaning, go take care of what you have to do in your house, but not the physical labor that all the other Jews were required to do.

The *Zera Shimshon* asks why it is that *Shevet Levi* was not included in the decree of the physical labor. After all, the *passuk* that describes the decree of the Egyptian exile does not differentiate between any of the *shevatim*. The *passuk* says (*Bereishis* 15:13), *ותם, כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם ועבדום וענו אותם, "Your children will be strangers in a land that is not their own. They will serve them and oppress them."* From this *passuk*, it seems that everyone would be part of this decree of slavery. If so, why is it that the *shevet* of Levi was excluded?

The *Zera Shimshon* answers that the *Medrash Rabba* (1:10) says that when Yosef HaTzaddik passed away, the Jewish people stopped keeping the mitzvah of *bris milah*. They wanted to be similar to the Egyptians. When this happened, Hashem made the Egyptians hate them.

Here too, the *Zera Shimshon* asks that it seems that had the Jewish people kept the mitzvah of *milah*, they would not have been subjected to the slavery and backbreaking labor of the Egyptian exile. How does this conform to the *passuk* that seems to say that the Jewish people would have been subjected to this decree unconditionally?

The *Zera Shimshon* suggests that there were two parts to the decree of going down to Egypt. Originally, the decree was only that the Jewish people would be strangers in the land. If, however, they would not keep the symbol of Jewish people, the mitzvah of *milah*, they would be subjected to the additional decree of slave labor. Being that the *shevet* of Levi kept the mitzvah of *milah*, they remained strangers but were not subjected to the physical labor. All the other Jews, who gave up the mitzvah of *milah*, were subsequently subjected to second part of the decree, namely, the backbreaking slave labor.

This, the *Zera Shimshon* culls from the wording of the aforementioned *passuk*. The *passuk* says, *"Your children will be strangers in a land that is not their own. They will serve them and oppress them."* The *passuk* could have said, "Your children will be oppressed in a land that is not their own." As well, once the *passuk* said that they will strangers, there is no need to add *"in a land that is not their own."*

The *Zera Shimshon* says that if the decree was indeed a two-part decree, this *passuk* is very well understood. The first part of the decree was that the Jewish people would be strangers in a foreign land. If they would be noticed and live as though it were not their own land by keeping their Jewish identity through the mitzvah of *milah*, the decree would end there. This is why the *passuk* adds *"in a land that is not their own"* – to emphasize that if they would live as if this were not their land and not try to integrate into the ways of the Egyptians. Then, all that the decree would entail would be living as strangers in Egypt.

If, however, they would not keep this difference, the *passuk* continues to tell what the second part of the decree would be: *"They will serve them and oppress them."* This is why the *passuk* says the decree in two parts and doesn't just say, "Your children will be oppressed in a land that is not theirs."





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JOKES

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I'm renovating my house, and the first floor is going well.
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I asked my friend, "When is your birthday?"
He said, "March 1st."
So I stood up, marched around the room, sat back down, and asked again, "When is your birthday?"

An Englishman, a Scotsman, an Irishman, a Welshman, a Russian, a Latvian, a Turk, an Aussie, a German, an American, a Cypriot, an Egyptian, a Mexican, a Spaniard, a Pole, a Lithuanian, a Romanian, a Dane, an Israeli, a Bulgarian, a Serb, a Greek, a Norwegian, an Ethiopian, a Nigerian and a Chilean walk into a bar.
The bouncer steps in front of the group. "Sorry, I can't let you in without a Thai."

Although I do sometimes make terrible puns, I think if you were to look at all the puns I make, the good would outweigh the bad, and it'd average out okay. Put differently, although I may make terrible jokes, I mean well.



Brought to you by Uncle Benji, author of *Laughter is the best medicine: Kosher and Jewish jokes for the whole family*, volumes one and two, and *Jewish Joke Book for Kids*, volumes one and two, available on Amazon.

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS z"l



Two Heroines

In the Torah, it is parents who give a child their name, and in the case of a special individual, G-d Himself. It is G-d who gives the name Isaac to the first Jewish child, G-d's angel who gives Jacob the name Israel, G-d who changes the names of Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah. We have already encountered one adoptive name, *Tzafnat Pa'neah*, the name by which Joseph was known in Egypt, yet Joseph remains Joseph. How surpassingly strange that the hero of the Exodus, the greatest of all the prophets, should bear not the name Amram and Yocheved have undoubtedly used thus far, but the one given to him by his adoptive mother, an Egyptian princess.

A Midrash draws our attention to the fact. "This is the reward for those who do kindness. Although Moshe had many names, the only one by which he is known in the whole Torah is the one given to him by the daughter of Pharaoh. Even the Holy One, blessed be He, did not call him by any other name." (*Shemot Rabba 1:26*) Indeed, Moshe – Meses – is an Egyptian name, meaning "child," as in Ramses (which means child of Ra; Ra was the greatest of the Egyptian gods.).

Who then was Pharaoh's daughter? Nowhere is she explicitly named. However, the *First Book of Chronicles* (4:18) mentions a daughter of Pharaoh, named Bitya, and it was she whom the Sages identified as the woman who saved Moshe. The name Bitya (sometimes rendered as Batya) means "the daughter of G-d." From this, the Sages drew one of their most striking lessons: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: 'Moshe was not your son, yet you called him your son. You are not My daughter, but I shall call you My daughter.'" (*Vayikra Raba 1:3*) They added that she was one of the few people (tradition enumerates nine) who were so righteous that they entered paradise in their lifetime.

Instead of "Pharaoh's daughter," read "Hitler's daughter" or "Stalin's daughter," and we see what is at stake. Tyranny cannot destroy humanity. Moral courage can sometimes be found in the heart of darkness. That the Torah itself tells the story the way it does has enormous implications. It means that when it comes to people, we must never generalize, never stereotype. The Egyptians were not all evil; even from Pharaoh himself, a heroine was born. Nothing could signal more powerfully that the Torah is not an ethnocentric text, that we must recognize virtue wherever we find it, even among our enemies, and that the basic core of human values – humanity, compassion, courage – is truly universal. Holiness may not be; goodness is.

Outside Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, is an avenue dedicated to righteous gentiles. Pharaoh's daughter is a supreme symbol of what they did and what they were. I, for one, am profoundly moved by that encounter on the banks of the Nile between an Egyptian princess and a young Israelite child, Moshe's sister Miriam. The contrast between them in terms of age, culture, status, and power could not be greater. Yet their deep humanity bridges all the differences, all the distance. Two heroines. May they inspire us.

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Rebbe didn't tell you

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Rabbi Dovid Bartfeld
Monday, January 19

Fertility in Halacha

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TBA

Monday, January 26

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Monday, February 2

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