



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"א טבת תש"פ – שמות – 18th January 2020 - Volume 12 - Issue 25

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Chizky and Avital Salomon on the occasion of Ayala's wedding to Avrohom Kahan on Tuesday.

Mazel Tov to Peter and Ann Nissen on the recent Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Mishael Nissen.

### שובבי"ם Series

Taharas Hamishpacha Refresher and Shalom Bayis series for men by R' Shaya. Starting this Thursday 22nd January every Thursday night 8.15 - 8.50 until Thursday 20 February.

### Save The Date

The Shul Melave Malka will iyH take place Motzei Shabbos Beshalach Feb 8th. Invitations were emailed to members earlier this week. We look forward to what will be an enjoyable evening. If you did not receive your invitation please email us on office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk

## Why Was Moshe Chosen To Lead The Jewish People?

**Boruch Michaels**

Rambam in Shemonah Perakim 7 states that the qualities required to become a Navi are divided into two categories: Intellectual and Moral. Physical attributes & Spiritual attributes. Let us begin with the Physical attributes required.

The Gemora in Nedarim 38a states that a Navi must be wealthy, mighty and wise. The Gemora proceeds to prove from Posukim that Moshe and other prophets fulfilled these requirements. According to the Ran, physical attributes such as wealth and physical strength are required to gain the respect of the people.

Accordingly, the Ran, because the Gemora teaches that Moshe was exceedingly tall, he thus by logic must have been very strong. The Shitah Mekubetzes states that a financially dependent leader has the unique ability to chastise and rebuke his people without fear of financial repercussions. Rambam says a Prophet must be "mighty" ie: resolute to temptation and "wealthy" ie: rich in understanding. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (RSRH) states that before a human receives the call of G-d as a prophet, they must be outstandingly strong, wise and rich. The Isaac Levy translation of RSRF states: "G-d does not pick out weaklings, simpletons, nor those who are dependent on others to be messengers of his word."

In addition to these ideas, the Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez (a Sephardi talmudic master who lived during the 1700s in Spain) recounts the story of Moshe's life between his flight from Egypt and his settling in Midian. This extensive account retells Moshe leading the armies of Cush into battle, winning great victories, ultimately leading to his appointment as King of Cush. This saga unrelated in the Torah text underlines and emphasises Moshe's credible credentials to become leader of a Jewish people numbering approximately 600,000 men.

Indeed, Ibn Ezra and Abarbanel both regard it as providential that Moshe should have a princely upbringing & education with a stark expert knowledge in military tactics and leadership. In addition, Ibn Ezra states that by originating in an environment of royalty and distinction at a time when his brethren were entrapped in an inbred slave mentality, Moshe gained notoriety within the Jewish people. If Moshe had grown up amongst his own people, they would have had no respect for him and he would have been considered just as another unimportant Jew.

There is another major reason that Moshe was chosen as leader. This involves Moshe's moral qualities. In 2:11 Moshe "saw the burdens" of the Jewish people. Rashi says that Moshe "saw and shared in their [the Jew's] distress."

The Seforno comments: "[Moshe] turned his attention towards them [the Jews.]" The idea that Moshe as a Prince of Egypt sometime between the age of 2-20 who was aloof from the world of slavery whilst living in Pharaoh's Palace, actively chose to concentrate his sight and thoughts towards the "burdens" of the Jewish people, when he could have easily ignored the blatant intranational servitude, demonstrates that

Moshe chose to become sensitive to the subjugation and plight of the Jewish people. According to the Vayikrah Rabbah in Bechokosi, Moshe joined in the service of the Jewish people as a volunteer with the intention of slightly alleviating their burden. The Yeffeh Toaz p.9 states that Moshe even convinced Pharaoh of giving the Jewish people Shabbos as a day of rest so that the Jews could recuperate from their harsh labor.

Incidentally, this is why on Shabbos morning we say ישמח משה במתנת חלקו , alluding to Moshe creating Shabbos as a "portion" of respite for the enslaved Jewish people in Egypt (Or Hachaim 281.) In my humble opinion, I think Moshe showed incredible courage to risk his position in Pharaoh's household by precariously aiding the Jews. Indeed, Moshe was eventually informed on by Dathan and Aviram and sentenced to the death penalty.

Moshe's name was given to him by Batyah the daughter of Pharaoh after she drew him out from the river Nile. Chizkuni asks, did she call him Moshe: 'to draw something else out' rather than Mashoi: 'that which has been drawn out'? RSRH states: Batyah wanted Moshe to never forget that she saved his life out of the kindness of her heart. She wanted Moshe to remember at all times to have a soft heart for others when they are in a time of distress. She wanted Moshe to be a deliverer from oppression, to be empathetic and sensitive to the needs of others. This is why she called him Moshe: 'to draw something else out'; ie: to raise people up from the depths of their despair. To be kind. Batya's self-sacrifice of going against her father's law of the genocide of all Jewish boys is the reason according to the Shemos Rabbah that then name she gave him is the one he is publicly known as. In my humble opinion, Batya's self-sacrifice and beautiful intention could be the reason why her name is remembered in the text of the Torah and Pharaoh's (despite being a major figure) is not.

Rashi 2:14 implies that Moshe understood that the reason why the Jews were in exile was that they didn't respect and even hated each other. So much so, that infighting was common and that a Jewish Prince who is risking his life to

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת שמות

Candle Lighting	No later than 4.07pm
Mincha	4.12pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.17am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	4.00pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.20pm
Ovos uBonim	6.20pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Wed / Thurs / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.15pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

help the Jewish people could be reported to the authorities by his own people.

As a final point, the Gemora in Nedarim 38a states that a Navi must be humble. Moshe in Bahaloseca is called by G-d: "Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth. The Chofetz Chaim says: The obligation of a person is according to his ability. Moshe didn't think he was better than other people even though he had received the Torah. He was just doing his job according to his ability; which in his case was an extremely high one. Ibn Ezra says that Moshe did not view himself as being more important than his brother Aharon. Ramban elucidates the Ibn Ezra and says that Moshe did not ask for greatness from any person, and he would not boast/be proud of his virtue at all כלל יתגאה במעלתו כלל. May we be Zocheh to have leaders who inspire us everyday to come closer to Hakodosh Baruch Hu.

## **Beforech**

**Jonathan Grosskopf**

Perek 1, Posuk 13, in Parshas Shemos, says that all the hard work etc, that Pharaoh enslaved Bnei Yisroel was done "Beforech." What does this term mean?

Ponim Yofos explains that because the tribe of Levi were the only tribe that continued to keep the mitzvah of Bris Milah, Pharaoh was unable to have any dominion over them i.e. he could not enslave them. However, as the other tribes ceased to keep this commandment, they broke away from keeping the yoke of the Torah. "Forech" means to "break away." This is like the Mishnah in Avos 3/5 which says: "All who break away ("Forech") from the Torah will have the yoke of dictatorship placed on them!" As we have seen Forech means in this Parsha to brake away from Torah.

Rashi quotes Gemorah Sotah 11A, to say, that "Perach" is work that is capable of breaking a person physically due to its intensity and nature.

Apirion posits from Midrash Shemos Rabbah 4/11, that the term "Beforech" means that initially the work was a national duty and only afterwards did it become hard servitude. Bnei Yisroel were "sweet talked" into this work! Sifsei Cohen adds, that on the first day Pharaoh himself participated in the national reconstruction of Egypt and Bnei Yisroel, with the noted exception of the tribe of Levi, enthusiastically joined in this project, not noticing that later the other Egyptians found excuses for not continuing to participate, until it was only the Jews who were left and then Pharaoh really "turned the screws" up on the Jews.

Be'er Mayim Chaim notes that when the Jews prayed to Hashem there was a miraculous population explosion that concerned Pharaoh and his advisors and so he tried to stop this "connection" by "putting a spin on all the hard work that was being imposed on Bnei Yisroel" by saying than they were being ungrateful to their hosts by complaining and not contributing more to Egypt's infrastructure as they were in fact "aliens" non - Egyptians!

Beis Halevi understands that this term (Forech) refers to Bnei Yisroel's reaction to the hard labour by trying to ingratiate themselves with the Egyptians and so reduce or minimise this ward enslavement as it says in Pirkei Avos 105:25 - "GD turned the hearts' of the Egyptians to hate them", Bnei Yisroel. It was only when Bnei Yisroel saw that their deliverance would not come from trying to assimilate with the Egyptians but only as a result of praying to Hashem that they were saved!

## **Cleverness Backfired**

**Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)**

The Bnei Yisrael were fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong...He said to his nation, "Behold, the nation, the Bnei Yisrael, are greater and stronger than us.

Before world leaders had Twitter accounts, they spoke to their court advisors, not to the general public. Why, then, does Paroh take his case to the Egyptian people as a whole? Why does he refer to the Jews as "the nation, the Bnei Yisrael?" Either one of those would have worked; using both together seems excessive. Setting the stage for Paroh's declaration, we learn that the Jews "were fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong," yet Paroh refers only to the last two items – that they had become greater in number, and stronger than the Egyptians. If the first two – that they were fruitful and teemed – were also important, why did Paroh not speak about those issues as well? Chazal teach us to understand the be-farech with which we were lured into slavery as soft, clever, solicitous speech, rather than draconian decree. If so, how are we to understand the very next verse. "They embittered their lives with mortar and bricks...all the labors that they performed with them were be-farech." While a glib tongue successfully laid a trap for them, it was back-breaking work, not a soft-spoken appeal that made their lives bitter.

The key to these pesukim is the realization that the last two of the four descriptions of the explosive growth of the Jewish community do not refer to numbers of people, but to wisdom and understanding. Only the first two descriptions refer to population growth. Additionally, am/"the nation" means

the common people, while "Bnei Yisrael" is reserved for the accomplished elite.

Paroh had two concerns. The common folk – am/the nation – were becoming more numerous than the Egyptians, while the most gifted cohort of the community swamped the Egyptians in wisdom. Moreover, even the ordinary people in the am produced an inordinate number of people possessed of superior intellect who were outperforming their Egyptian analogues. (Had this not been the case, Paroh would not have been so concerned with the growth rate alone.) Therefore, Paroh referred to both am and Bnei Yisrael, i.e. a nation expanding beyond projections, that was raising children so intellectually gifted that they put the Egyptians to shame. His consternation came from this toxic (to him) combination of the two factors.

Paroh decided to deal with the two groups of Jews separately, first focusing on the demographic issue. He turned not to his advisors, but to the ordinary Egyptians, thinking that a group of commoners more likely to understand the vulnerabilities of a group of their peers. They came up with an ingenious solution to the Jewish problem, that could have worked, c"v, were it not for one fatal error.

The Egyptian street proposed giving the Jews a limited amount of self-rule. The key element of the proposal was that some Jews – particularly from the common folk – would rule over others. This, the Egyptians claimed, would destroy their cohesiveness, would pit one Jew against another, and would generate all sorts of foolishness from "leaders" rather than wisdom.

When we examine similar arrangements in the course of history, we understand that this proposal could indeed have destroyed the Jewish community. The Egyptians, however, fell prey to their own zeal and greed. Because they subjected everyone to horrific conditions, the plan backfired. The appointees were too busy nursing their own wounds to think of lording it over their brethren.

Had the Egyptians continued to deal with the Jews with soft cunning rather than with oppression and pain, they might have succeeded. The Torah indicates this directly: "As much as they would afflict it [the Jewish people], so it would increase, and so it would teem." Notice the inclusion of one verb from each of the categories – raw numbers, and accomplishment. By afflicting and oppressing the Jews, however, they guaranteed that the plan would fail. The Jews continued to grow, both in accomplishment and in numbers.

So far, we've considered how the Egyptians wanted to deal with the masses of Jews. They had something else in mind for the high-achievers. Offering them a chance to rule over others was not going to work. They already were the de facto leaders of the community. The only route open to the Egyptians was to lure the accomplished class into servitude with glib talk of civic responsibility. They did just that, and then kept changing the rules, until this group – the "Bnei Yisrael" of our pesukim – were fully enslaved.

The upshot was the complete subjugation of the Jewish people, great and common alike. In the end, all suffered from the brutal slavery. It is in this sense that we must understand the Torah's summation: "They embittered their lives with mortar and bricks." All groups were brought under the umbrella of harsh servitude. "All the labors that they performed with them" now were so oppressive, that they could no longer recall the time when they had initially been enticed "be-farech," with soft-spoken words.

After a while, it was bitterness all around.

## **Q&A**

### **Kids**

1. What letter does sefer שמות begin with and why?
2. How many children were given birth to at once?

### **Adults**

1. פרק א פסוק א Why is the word הבאים in present tense in פרק א פסוק א?
2. Why did פרעה use labour to afflict the Jews?
3. What does the phrase כי חיות הנה mean?

1. This suggests that a new era was beginning. Once Yosef died the Egyptians treated the Jews differently; it was as if the nation was now coming to Egypt. (Midrash)  
 2. The sole purpose of the slave labour was to put suffering onto the Jews. Alternatively, it may be because they hoped the hard labour would reduce their birth rate. (Ibn Ezra)  
 3. Lit. As they were experts. However Or Hachaim suggests the midwives contended that the Jewish women suspected them of conspiring with Paroh and they gave them a later due date to the midwives so they wouldn't be present at their deaths.

### **Adults**

2. 6 (Rashi)  
 giving of the Torah. (Ramban)  
 There the letter י, this usually means and, this shows that בראשית is continued into the שמות.

### **Kids**

### **Answers**