



Ohr Yerushalayim News

9th January 2021 - Volume 13 - Issue 26 - שמות - כ"ה טבת תשפ"א

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Netanel Blackston and his parents, Raymond and Talia, on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos.

Chaim Aruchim

Chaim Aruchim to Nati Sebbag on the Petira of his father, Rabbi Eliezer Sebbag, in Israel. He is sitting Shiva till Tuesday morning and can be reached on 07906 129835.

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:

Shabbos 25th Teves - David Wolfson for his father

Sunday, 26th Teves, Laura Ann Hassan for her mother

The Mystery Of Moshe's Parentage! Jonathan Grosskopf

This Dvar Torah is written in the memory of my Brother - in - law, Michael Feldman (Yechiel Noson ben Shamai) O"H and in the memory of my Uncle, Josie Tenenbaum (Yosef ben Shlomo Menachem) O"H, whose yahrzeits are 21st & 23rd Teves respectively.

R' S R Hirsch says that the Torah in Posuk 1, Perek 2 in Parshas Shemos, omits naming the father and mother of Moshe. It is as if Moshe's birth is shrouded in mystery. This is probably the Torah's way of describing the oppressive atmosphere which prevailed at the time of Moshe's birth which necessitated underground resistance.

Maharal posits that as Moshe's birth was a historical event foreseen by Providence from the beginning of time. This event is not all tied to a particular family name. There was a man and woman of a noble family who got married and gave birth to Moshe: nothing more needed to be said!

The Tur notes that Moshe's parentage is not mentioned here as a reminder that Moshe was the savior of the whole of Bnei Yisroel and not only of his parents or family.

Shem Ephraim (Ephraim Zalman Margolis) contends that from Har Sinai onwards a person was forbidden to marry his aunt and (thus it was to spare the blushes of Amram and Yocheved), consequently the Torah did not wish to publicise who were the parties to the marriage.

Tam Voda'as notes that this was the first occasion that a Jewish man and woman married at times when the whole future of the Jewish people was at stake as a consequence of Pharaoh's evil decree, to kill all the Jewish male children.

Ayelet Hashachar quotes Gemara Sotah 12A, to say that it was a deliberate action on behalf of Amram to secretly remarry his wife so as not to put her life in danger. This might explain why Miriam is not mentioned but is referred to by the Torah as "his sister patiently waiting to see what happens to him (her brother)" - Moshe!

Ha'Emek Dovor opines that as Yocheved Was considerably older than Amram and it was very unusual for a man to marry a woman older than him, the Torah made no mention of the names of the parties who were involved in the marriage except to say that such an arrangement was not extraordinary in the tribe of Levi.

Oznayim LaTorah posits that at that time all Jewish men and women could have been parents to Moshe, the savior of the Jewish people. Except that Moshe's parents were in fact Amram, who so righteous a person that he died only because of the Divine decree that death should come into the world as a punishment of the sin of Adam & Chava, and Yocheved, who put her life in extreme danger in order to save the lives of countless Jewish boys as a result of Pharaoh's death decree.

Pushing the Envelope Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

This week's portion introduces us to Moshe Rabeinu, the messenger of Hashem who redeems the Jewish nation from Egypt. We are told of Hashem's proposal to Moshe to lead the Jews out of Egypt, and how Moshe refuses the opportunity.

First Moshe responds, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" (Exodus 3:11) After Hashem assures him of his ability Moshe asks, "When I go to the nation and they ask me, 'what is His name?' what shall I say?" (Exodus 3:14) Hashem responds again. Then Moshe respectfully demurs, "But they will not believe me, and they will not heed my voice, they will say 'Hashem did not appear to you!'" (Exodus 4:1) Again Hashem responds by giving Moshe two miraculous signs that he, when challenged, should in turn show to the Jewish nation.

And again Moshe is hesitant. "Please my L-rd," he cries, "I am not a man of words, for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of speech." Once again Hashem rejoins, "Who made a mouth for man or makes one deaf, or dumb, sighted or blind? Is it not I, Hashem!" (Exodus 4:10-11)

Hashem patiently responds to each of Moshe's excuses with a clearly defined rebuttal. Except when Moshe makes what proves to be his final plea. After exhausting all of his excuses, Moshe, seems desperate to absolve himself of the task and declares, "Send the one whom you usually send!" (Exodus 4:13) According to Rashi, Moshe was referring to Ahron, who prophesized to the Jews even before Moshe and throughout the time that Moshe was hiding in Midian.

Suddenly, the conciliatory answers cease. "The rage of Hashem burned against Moshe." Hashem declares to Moshe that Ahron is elated with the decision. "Ahron is going to greet you with joy in his heart!" (Exodus 4:14). There are no more protestations. Moshe journeys back to Egypt and into eternity. The question is obvious. What did Moshe finally say that inflamed the ire of Hashem to the extent that the Torah tells us that His "anger burned"? Hashem responded calmly to each of Moshe's previous justifiable issues. Why did Hashem only become angry when Moshe evoked the concept of using Ahron, the one who normally and previously did the prophesizing?

As a result of lower-level mismanagement, poor earnings, and low moral, the Board of Directors dismissed the CEO of a major corporation who

Davening Times

פרשת שמות

Zman Shabbos & Lighting
Mincha
Shacharis - Hashkomo
2nd Shacharis
סוף זמן ק"ש
1st Mincha
2nd Mincha
Motzei Shabbos
Ovos uBonim
Sun
Mon
Tues / Wed / Fri
Thurs Rosh Chodesh
Mincha
Mincha & Maariv
Late Maariv

מברכין שבת

3.54pm
3.59pm
7.45am
9.30am
10.18am
1.30pm
3.59pm
5.09pm
6.09pm
7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
6.40am / 7.00am / 8.00am
1.15pm
4.00pm
8.00pm

had served faithfully and successfully for many years. His wisdom and experience, however, were well respected in the industry and the new boss looked to the former executive for introductory advice.

"I can't tell you much," said the seasoned executive, "but I will give you something." The older boss, handed the neophyte executive two envelopes. One of them had a large #1 written on it, the second was marked #2. "Young man," began the former CEO, "when you are challenged with your first major crisis open envelope number one. If things have not calmed down after a few days, then open envelope number two."

After a brief turnaround, things began to fall apart. Soon a crisis erupted, the employees were disgruntled, and chaos began to reign. The Board of Directors were once again looking to make major changes, and the unseasoned executive's job was on the line. As hard as the young executive tried to calm the situation, it was futile. He locked himself in his office and opened the first envelope. In small but clear typewritten letters were the words, "Blame your predecessor." He followed the advice but the results were short-lived.

The following weeks were not productive. In fact, things were getting worse. It was time for the second envelope.

The young CEO opened it. When he saw the message typed on the small piece of paper, he knew his time had come. It read, "prepare two envelopes."

The Bechor Shor explains that as long as Moshe's hesitations engendered reasons that entailed his own perceived shortcomings, Hashem responded with a clear and precise rebuttal. But when Moshe exclaimed, "send the one who used to go," and did once again not offer any reason for his own failing but shifted the responsibility to his brother Ahron, Hashem became upset. And at that point, "the rage of Hashem burned against Moshe."

When challenged with difficult tasks we must face the mission presented to us and deal with our own abilities. By shifting the responsibility to someone else, even if we feel he is better suited, we may be inviting wrath. Because when we are asked by Hashem to perform, then there is no one better to do the job.

Leadership Qualities

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

Moses, the chosen messenger of the Master of the Universe, came riding out of the desert into the fabled kingdom of Egypt. With nothing more than the staff in his hand and his brother Aaron at his side, he strode into the royal palace, confronted Pharaoh and demanded, "Let my people go!"

Thus began the spectacular story of the Exodus. Time and again, Moses confronted the belligerent Pharaoh, and after each refusal, he visited a shattering new plague onto Egypt until it was beaten into submission, and the enslaved Jewish people were finally free. As for Moses, he has come down to us as the greatest leader of all time, the man who single-handedly took on the might of the entire Egyptian kingdom and prevailed.

But let us stop and think for a moment. Wherein exactly lay the greatness of Moses in his mission to Egypt? Every step he took, every word he spoke, every move he made was choreographed by Hashem. Hashem told him exactly when and where to go, exactly what to say, exactly what to do. All Moses had to do was follow his instructions faithfully. He had no personal input into any aspect of his spectacular performance. Why then is Moses considered such a towering figure in the history of the Exodus?

The commentators explain that the one critical element that would determine the success or failure of his mission was entirely in Moses's control. "I want you to know," Hashem said to him, "that you are going on the condition that you perform my wonders in front of Pharaoh without fearing him." Without fearing him. This was the key.

As Hashem's chosen messenger, Moses enjoyed full divine protection, and he knew full well that Pharaoh could not harm him. But it is one thing to know this intellectually and quite another to feel it in one's heart. According to the Midrash, Pharaoh's throne was surrounded by snarling lions and fierce warriors, and Pharaoh himself was an exceedingly intimidating tyrant. No matter how sure Moses was that he would come to no harm, could he enter such a scenario without a twinge of trepidation in his heart? And yet, if he had exhibited the slightest tremor in his voice, the slightest flutter of his heart, the slightest blink of his eye, he would have compromised his entire mission. Hashem had sent Moses to demonstrate His absolute mastery over Pharaoh, to show that Pharaoh was utterly nothing, putty in the hands of Heaven. Therefore, had Moses felt any fear, he would have acknowledged Pharaoh as an adversary, albeit an infinitely weaker one, and thereby doomed his mission to failure.

Here then lay the greatness of Moses. He saw clearly that there is no power

in the world other than Hashem, that Pharaoh in contraposition to G-d was a total nonentity, unworthy of even the slightest smidgen of fear. Therefore, when Moses walked fearlessly into Pharaoh's palace, everyone, Egyptian and Jew alike, knew that Hashem was in absolute control

A great general, who was in the process of mounting an invasion of a neighboring country, called a meeting of his most trusted advisors. "Gentlemen, I have a problem," the general began. "I had hoped to win fame and glory for our armies during this campaign by thoroughly trouncing the enemy. But wherever my armies appear, the enemy flees. We have still had no opportunity to engage them in battle and destroy them. How can we get the enemy to stand and fight?"

"We take hostages," said one advisor. "That will force them to fight."

"We plan ambushes," said another. "We cut off their escape routes."

Other advisers suggested yet other ruses to force the enemy to fight.

"You are all wrong," said one old advisor. "If the enemy flees whenever your armies appear, what greater glory can there be?"

In our own lives, we often face trials and challenges that strike fear into our hearts. Whether the threat is to our health, financial security, family life or anything else, the effect can be frightening and, indeed, devastating. But if we can find the strength to look at the world in the broader perspective, if we recognize that we are all messengers of Heaven doing his bidding here on the face of the earth, we will discover that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. As long as we connect ourselves to the infinite reality of the Creator, all our worries pale into insignificance.

A Script Without Credits

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"And these are the names of the Children of Israel..." (1:1)

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.