



## Our Place

"**A**nd the Children of Israel were fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong – very, very, much so; and the land became filled with them." (Shemos 1:7). Rashi (in the name of the Medrash) explains that the Jewish women gave birth to six babies at a time. With such an astronomical birth rate, the land was sure to be full of Jews in no time. Why then does the verse add, "and the land became filled with them"? This question puzzled Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt"l. He begins his answer with another question. "Know with certainty that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not their own" (Bereshis 15:13). If they are strangers, of course they are in a land that is not theirs. Why does the verse need to state it? Rav Diskin answers that there was a part of Mitzraim that was theirs. The Daas Zekanim relate that Paroh gave the land of Goshen to Sara Emainu as a gift. That land was the place for the Jews. Yaakov Avinu sent Yehuda to Goshen to establish a Beis HaMedrash. When Yosef introduced his brothers to Paroh, he only showed Paroh the weaker ones. Why? Paroh would think that they were all weak, and not fit to work for the Mitzrim. Therefore he would leave them alone and allow them to keep to themselves in Goshen.

**T**his is what indeed happened. The Bnei Yisrael could have stayed in Goshen and peacefully learned Torah. If they had done so, they would have undergone the *golus* (exile) without the hard labor and torture. That is how it went during the lifetime of the *shevatim* (sons of Yaakov). What happened afterward? "And the land became filled with them." They ventured out of Goshen into the land of Mitzraim proper. They involved themselves in the business and activities of the Mitzrim. They had no business being there. Mitzraim was a land full of immorality and impurity. They had put themselves into spiritual danger. "A new king arose over Mitzraim who did not know Yosef" (Shemos 1:8). Their visibility aroused the hatred of the Mitzrim. "Come let us deal wisely with them" (Shemos 1:10). Thus began the slavery and the torture. The horrors of the affliction of the Mitzrim. Oh why did it

have to happen? They should have stayed in their place.

from the bush and said, 'Moshe, Moshe.'" (Shemos 3:4).

*Kinderlach . . .*

*We know our place. Hashem gave us a wonderful, glorious, exalted purpose in this world: to be His nation. To uphold His honor. To learn His Torah. We have our own special places to do our job: the Beis HaMedrash, the home, the kosher workplace. The world is full of spiritual and physical dangers. Our places offer us protection. If we leave our place, chas veshalom, to do something that we should not be doing, we expose ourselves to the dangers. We also arouse the animosity of those who are against us. Why go out, kinderlach? Our place is the best*



**O**ur sages are teaching us that "turning to see" was an act of drawing closer to Hashem, which immediately made Moshe worthy of receiving prophecy. How much or little he approached was irrelevant. The mere act of turning was enough, because Hashem's Presence fills the entire universe. He is waiting to draw close to those who turn to Him.

*Kinderlach . . .*

*Getting close to Hashem is our whole purpose in life. If we turn toward Him, He will draw close to us. Did you eat a delicious apple today? Stop for a moment. Turn aside. Think. Where did that apple come from? Who created it? Who made it so delicious, so beautiful, and so good for you? Who else but Hashem could possibly create such a wondrous thing? Look in the mirror and smile. What a beautiful face! Who could possibly create such beautiful features with all of the skin and muscles working together to create that lovely smile. Only One. Take the time to stop. Think. Turn aside toward Him. He will come close to you.*

## Make the Effort

"**H**ashem is close to all who call upon Him" (Tehillim 145:18). How close is Hashem? Rav Shach zt"l relates an insight in his sefer, "A Beacon of Light" which shows just how close He really is. Moshe Rabbeinu was tending the sheep of his father-in-law, Yisro. He saw a bush burning, but the fire did not consume the bush. "I will turn aside now and look at this great sight" (Shemos 3:3). How much did he turn aside? Rebbe Yochanan says that he walked three steps. Reish Lakish says that he did not walk but he inclined his neck. "Hashem saw that he turned aside to see; and He called out to him

### Parasha Questions

- Who were Shifra and Puah? (Rashi 1:15)
- Which houses did Hashem give to the midwives as their reward for saving the babies? (Rashi 1:21)
- "Indeed the matter is known!" (2:14). What became known? (Rashi).
- How did Paroh treat his tsoraas? (Rashi 2:23).
- What was Moshe's first request from Paroh? (3:18)
- Which signs did Hashem give to Moshe? (4:2-9)
- "I am not a man of words" (4:10). What was Hashem's answer to this claim?
- Who wanted to kill Moshe and what happened to them? (4:19 and Rashi)
- What happened to the elders? (Rashi 5:1)
- What was Paroh's response to Moshe and Aharon's request? (5:6-9)