
CELEBRATING OUR 25th YEAR!

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE • WWW.OHR.EDU

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT SHEMOT • 19 TEVET 5778 - JAN. 6, 2018 • VOL. 25 NO. 13

PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

The Trump Card

*“Come let us outsmart it lest it become more numerous,
and it may be that if a war will occur, it too may join our enemies...” (1:10)*

My first reaction to the nations of the world’s overwhelming rejecting of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel was a mixture of disappointment and hurt feelings.

“Why can’t they accept us? Why can’t they live in peace with us?”

My second reaction was, “Nothing changes.”

Anti-Semitism is as old as “Semitism.”

The first recorded anti-Semitic slur is recorded in this week’s Torah portion:

“The Children of Yisrael are more numerous and stronger than us. Come let us outsmart it, lest it become more numerous, and it may be that if a war will occur, it too may join our enemies...”

One of the methods that the Nazis (*yemach she-mam v’zichram*) used to condition the Germans to accept a policy of Jewish genocide was to portray the Jews as vermin, not human at all. For example, Nazi propaganda films of the thirties show sequences of scurrying rats, closely intercut with scenes of poor Jews scuttling around the Shtetl. Jews who clearly have psychological or physical problems are shown as exemplars of the nation. A chilling echo of this is

Pharaoh’s use of the singular ‘it’ following the collective noun “Children of Yisrael” in the above verse. Technically, ‘it’ is the correct pronoun, but it carries the subliminal message that the Jew is less than human — an ‘it’ and not a ‘he.’

“...it too may join our enemies...” This is an amazing wildly-fantastic accusation. Was it not Yosef, the Jew, who saved Egypt and the civilized world from utter starvation? Time and again the loyalty of Jewish servants of the crown is a cause for anti-Semitism, rather than a guard against it. In every generation, again rises the libel of Jewish potential perfidy, a festering fifth column in the body politic.

Until Mashiach comes we should not expect nor court the good offices of the nations of the world. Anti-Semitism is the norm. But in the midst of the darkness there will always be the Righteous of the Nations who will recognize us as “G-d’s People”. However, we cannot and should not expect the recognition of the nations until the day when “G-d is One, and His Name is One.”

May it be soon!

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

Shavuot 30 - 36

Mind Your Own Business!

“And he did among his people that which is “not good” (Yechezkel 18:18) — Rav said, “This refers to a person who comes (to court) with power-of-attorney.”

The verse is speaking about a person being punished for his own transgressions, and not those of his ancestors. The Maharsha explains that the context of the verse is about monetary claims made between close family members — such as between a father and son, or between brothers — and there is likely great temptation to appoint a third party to press the claim in court in order to avoid embarrassment and lack of family harmony.

However, explains the Maharsha, this is “not good,” since if the actual litigant would be present in court to put forward his claim, it is possible that a harmonious compromise would be reached. Or, better yet, it is possible that the claimant would forgo the debt and stop pursuing his claim. The Maharsha sees a hint to this idea in the *repetition* of the words for the monetary transgressions mentioned in the verse, suggesting that the one making a claim might realize that he too is guilty of the same transgression in the other direction, and therefore drop his claim altogether. Introducing a non-litigant to represent one of the parties makes the possibility of complete or partial compromise virtually impossible, since this “outsider” with power of attorney needs to be rigid in his ways in order to fairly represent the one who appointed him.

There are other reasons taught as halacha for a power of attorney to be “not good”. One case is if both litigants live in the same city and can therefore be in attendance — so why should a person who is not a litigant come with a power of attorney to inject himself into a dispute that is not his business? However, if the defendant is in a different city, or is a “bully” who will intimidate the lender trying to retrieve his loan or monetary claim — it is a mitzvah for a person to act with a power of attorney to help the claimant receive just treatment and compensation. (See Aruch Hashulchan, *Choshen Mishpat* 123, who discusses this subject in greater detail.)

• *Shavuot 31a*

An Open House

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, “Showing hospitality to guests is greater than receiving the Divine Presence.”

After Avraham circumcised himself as G-d commanded, these three verses relate what happened next: “And G-d appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day. And he raised his eyes and saw three men standing beside him... and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent and bowed himself to the ground. And he said, ‘My [masters OR G-d], if only I have found favor in [your OR Your] eyes, please do not pass by from your servant.’ ” (Ber. 18:1-3)

A *beraita* on our *daf* relates a dispute amongst our Sages regarding the meaning of the third verse — whether Avraham was addressing the human visitors, or whether he was addressing G-d, Who had just appeared to him as stated in the first verse. If it is the former, then the word spelled *aleph*, *daled*, *nun* and *yod* is not holy, but if it is the latter, then it is a holy name of G-d. Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav that the latter is the correct interpretation, and that Avraham is asking G-d: “Please do not depart from me, but rather wait for me until after I show hospitality to the guests.” Rashi in Chumash cites both opinions, and the Rambam rules like the opinion that it is a holy name, in accordance with the teaching of a “pair” of Tanas mentioned in our sugya, and consistent with the teaching of Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav: “All names of G-d that are written concerning Avraham are holy, even ‘G-d, if I have found favor in Your eyes’ is also holy.” (Foundations of the Torah 6:9)

• *Shavuot 35b*

PARSHA Q&A?

1. Why does the verse say “And Yosef was in Egypt”?
 2. “...And they will go up out of the land.” Who said this and what did he mean?
 3. Why did Pharaoh specifically choose water as the means of killing the Jewish boys? (Two reasons.)
 4. “She saw that he was good.” What did she see “good” about Moshe that was unique?
 5. Which Hebrew men were fighting each other?
 6. Moshe was afraid that the Jewish People were not fit to be redeemed because some among them committed a certain sin. What sin?
 7. Why did the Midianites drive Yitro’s daughters away from the well?
 8. How did Yitro know that Moshe was Yaakov’s descendant?
 9. What lesson was Moshe to learn from the fact that the burning bush was not consumed?
 10. What merit did the Jewish People have that warranted G-d’s promise to redeem them?
 11. Which expression of redemption would assure the people that Moshe was the true redeemer?
 12. What did the staff turning into a snake symbolize?
 13. Why didn’t Moshe want to be the leader?
 14. “And G-d was angry with Moshe...” What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger?
 15. What was special about Moshe’s donkey?
 16. About which plague was Pharaoh warned first?
 17. Why didn’t the elders accompany Moshe and Aharon to Pharaoh? How were they punished?
 18. Which tribe did not work as slaves?
 19. Who were the: a) *nogsim* b) *shotrim*?
 20. How were the *shotrim* rewarded for accepting the beatings on behalf of their fellow Jews?
-

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week’s questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 1:5 - This verse adds that, despite being in Egypt as a ruler, Yosef maintained his righteousness.
 2. 1:10 - Pharaoh said it, meaning that the Egyptians would be forced to leave Egypt.
 3. 1:10,22 - He hoped to escape Divine retribution, as G-d promised never to flood the entire world. Also, his astrologers saw that the Jewish redeemer’s downfall would be through water.
 4. 2:2 - When he was born, the house was filled with light.
 5. 2:13 - Datan and Aviram.
 6. 2:14 - *Lashon hara* (evil speech).
 7. 2:17 - Because a ban had been placed on Yitro for abandoning idol worship.
 8. 2:20 - The well water rose towards Moshe.
 9. 3:12 - Just as the bush was not consumed, so too Moshe would be protected by G-d.
 10. 3:12 - That they were destined to receive the Torah.
 11. 3:16,18 - “I surely remembered (*pakod pakade-ti*).”
 12. 4:3 - It symbolized that Moshe spoke ill of the Jews by saying that they wouldn’t listen to him, just as the original snake sinned through speech.
 13. 4:10 - He didn’t want to take a position above that of his older brother Aharon.
 14. 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a *kohen*.
 15. 4:20 - It was used by Avraham for *akeidat Yitzchak* and will be used in the future by *mashiach*.
 16. 4:23 - Death of the firstborn.
 17. 5:1 - The elders were accompanying Moshe and Aharon, but they were afraid and one by one they slipped away. Hence, at the giving of the Torah, the elders weren’t allowed to ascend with Moshe.
 18. 5:5 - The tribe of Levi.
 19. 5:6 - a) Egyptian taskmasters; b) Jewish officers.
 20. 5:14 - They were chosen to be on the Sanhedrin.
-

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

Love of the Land, written by RAV MENDEL WEINBACH, *zt”l* • General Editor: RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN • Design: RABBI ELIEZER SHAPIRO

© 1992 - 2018 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.
Editor’s disclaimer: Ohrnet Magazine is not intended to be a source for halachic rulings. In any real and specific case one should consult a qualified halachic authority for a ruling.

LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

The Siloam Spring

In Divrei Hayamim II (32:2-3) it is recorded that King Chizkiyahu ordered the stopping up of the springs around Jerusalem, which were the source of water for the city, in order to deprive the invading Assyrian army of Sancherib of making use of them. To make those waters still available for his people, “He brought them straight down to the west side of the City of David.” (ibid. 32:30)

Historians say that this refers to the 450-meter long tunnel that the king’s workers hollowed out of bedrock. The “Siloam Inscription,” named for the spring whose waters flowed through this tunnel, records the dramatic moment when the two teams of

excavators that dug in opposite directions met to celebrate the completion of the project.

The Siloam Inscription was discovered in 1880 and taken by the Ottoman rulers to an Istanbul museum. In 2007, then-mayor Uri Lupolianski asked the Turkish ambassador to Israel to arrange for the return of the historic tablet as a gesture of good will between allies. It should be noted that while the stopping up of the springs may have been a clever military strategy, Chizkiyahu was criticized by the Sages for taking such a drastic step rather than relying on G-d’s promise (Melachim II, 19:34) that “I will defend the city to save it.” (Pesachim 56a)



PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the death of Yosef, the Book of Bereishet (Genesis) comes to an end. The Book of Shemot (Exodus) chronicles the creation of the nation of Israel from the descendants of Yaakov. At the beginning of this week’s parsha, Pharaoh, fearing the population explosion of Jews, enslaves them. However, when their birthrate increases, he orders the Jewish midwives to kill all newborn males. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe and hides him in the reeds by the Nile. Pharaoh’s daughter finds and adopts him, although she knows he is probably a Hebrew. Miriam, Moshe’s sister, offers to find a nursemaid for Moshe and arranges for his mother Yocheved to fulfill that role. Years later, Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and Moshe kills the Egyptian. Realizing his life is in danger, Moshe flees to Midian where he rescues Tziporah, whose father Yitro approves their subsequent marriage. On Chorev (Mount Sinai) Moshe

witnesses the burning bush where G-d commands him to lead the Jewish People from Egypt to *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land promised to their ancestors. Moshe protests that the Jewish People will doubt his being G-d’s agent, so G-d enables Moshe to perform three miraculous transformations to validate himself in the people’s eyes: transforming his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into a leprous one, and water into blood. When Moshe declares that he is not a good public speaker, G-d tells him that his brother Aharon will be his spokesman. Aharon greets Moshe on his return to Egypt and they petition Pharaoh to release the Jews. Pharaoh responds with even harsher decrees, declaring that the Jews must produce the same quota of bricks as before but without being given supplies. The people become dispirited, but G-d assures Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to let the Jews leave.

audio.ohr.edu

Now available free of charge,
anytime, anywhere.



OHR SOMAYACH
AUDIO LIBRARY

BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Fathers and Sons

From: Alex

Dear Rabbi,

Our son is past bar-mitzvah age. Unfortunately, he is not very interested in keeping mitzvot. No matter how much I try to encourage, convince, or even pressure him, he does not respond, and even gets angry to the point where the household gets full of tension, until my wife comes to his defense to calm him down. This upsets me very much since she is effectively condoning his behavior, and the other children might get the impression that it can be tolerated. One thing I can say is that the little that my son does continue to keep is mainly through his mother's encouragement. I'm at a loss over what to do. Please give me some guidance.

Dear Alex,

I am very sorry to hear of this very trying situation, and any father in your position would naturally be distraught and torn over it. A father feels a special obligation and privilege to raise his son as a believing and observant individual. He aspires to see his son assume a place among the Jewishly committed men of the family, and of the Jewish People. And he hopes that his son will raise his own Jewish family and thereby ensure the continuity of Judaism and our unique relationship with G-d.

However, as always was, and always will be, young people will be young. Often, youth are superficial, attracted to enticements, and drawn after pleasures. This applies all the more so in our age of shallow externality and mass-marketing of technology-assisted, ready-accessible indulgence. This is as in the Talmudic adage (Berachot 32a): "It is like a man who had a son who bathed, anointed, fed and gave drink to him, hung a pocket of money on his neck, and placed him at the door of a brothel. What would the son do but sin?"

In addition to all this, modern society grants independence and adulthood to youth at a very young age. Once so entitled, and given access to "all that life has to offer", they naturally come to demand "their rights"

and fervently guard against anything that might undermine them — even parents. Is it any wonder that a father such as yourself who, despite having only your son's best interest in mind, should encounter impatience, tension and even anger?

Nevertheless, in a conflict between being right vs. wise and being idealistic vs. realistic, rather than choosing to be correct and idealistic but to fail, we must choose to be wise, realistic and to succeed.

At this point, even more important than keeping your son interested in *mitzvot* is keeping him interested in being at home. The more "encouragement" (which is perceived by him to be confrontation) arouses him to anger, the less he will want to be at home and with his family. The more he's away, the further he'll stray. It's that simple. Unfortunately, the more you accept this challenging reality, and avoid what you call encouraging, convincing and even pressuring him, the better he will feel about being at home and with family. So, even if he's not proactively doing what you'd like, at least he's staying out of trouble and away from bad influences.

Indeed, accommodating him in this way raises serious questions about the other children, but the outcome is certainly less damaging than calling attention to your son's lack of observance in front of them. In most cases, as long as we don't make a spectacle of it, the other children don't notice as much as you think they do. And in any case, the anger and rebelliousness he displays in front of the other children is most certainly a bad example for them in the long-run.

Rather, once things cool down, the pressure is off him, and he feels better about just being at home and with the family, you and your wife can speak to him calmly and privately about what accommodations you're willing to make because you love him, and what boundaries he must respect because he loves you and his siblings.

Regarding your wife's role in all this, it seems that what you perceive to be her condoning his unacceptable behavior is actually her intuitive realization that a tougher approach will not work here. And that it's better to be wise and keep your son than to be right and lose him. To be sure, this is one of the reasons why,

continued on page eleven

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

The Pharaoh and the King

I still remember my fifth grade *rebbe*, Rabbi A. Y. Berman, asking the one-hundred-dollar question: Why does the Torah sometimes refer to the Egyptian monarch as *Melech Mitzrayim* (“the King of Egypt”) and sometimes as *Pharaoh* (“the Pharaoh”)?) The term *Melech Mitzrayim* appears in the Bible close to fifty times, while the word *Pharaoh* appears a whopping 274 times! In six cases, both names are used together: *Pharaoh Melech Mitzrayim* (Ex. 6:11; 6:13; 6:29; 14:8, I Kgs. 3:1, and Ezek. 29:2). Why does the Bible sometimes use one term, sometimes the other — and sometimes both?

As you might know, Pharaoh is not a personal name, but rather it is a title held by the King of Egypt. Rashi (to Ps. 34:1 and Ezra 6:14) writes that every king of Egypt is called Pharaoh (in contrast, Radak to Gen. 26:9 writes that *most* kings of Egypt were named/called Pharaoh). When the Pharaoh’s butler spoke up to recommend Yosef as a dream-interpreter, the butler began his speech by saying, “I shall mention my sin today: Pharaoh became angry at his servant (i.e. me) and he put me in detention...” (Gen. 41:10) In some versions of Rashi’s commentary, here he again comments that every king of Egypt is called Pharaoh. Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura (1440-1500) points out that Rashi proffered that explanation because one might otherwise think that Pharaoh was the king’s name and the butler acted disrespectfully by referring to the king by his personal name. To preclude that understanding, Rashi explained that all Egyptian kings are called Pharaoh, so Pharaoh is a title and not a name. Ibn Ezra (there) makes a similar point.

Nonetheless, the Bible does give us the personal names of three different Egyptian kings. Firstly, the Egyptian king during the reigns of King Solomon and his son Rehoboam was named Shishak (interestingly, the Bible never describes him as *Pharaoh*, but only as *Melech Mitzrayim*). Shishak is commonly identified by archeologists as Pharaoh Shoshenq I. Secondly, the Egyptian king during the reign of King Josiah was Pharaoh Necho (“lame” or “handicap” Pharaoh). According to the Midrash, he was called such because he was partially paralyzed. When Necho killed Josiah in battle, he captured King Solomon’s Throne, and when he dared sit on it one of the lions on the throne struck

him, rendering him partially paralyzed. The third king mentioned by name is in the generation after Josiah. When Jeremiah foretells the downfall of Egypt, he mentions its leader by name: Pharaoh Chafra, king of Egypt (Jer. 44:30).

The Apocryphal Midrash *Sefer HaYashar* gives us the personal names of some more kings of Egypt. According that source, Severus, son of Anam (see Gen. 10:13 which lists the Anamites as descendants of Ham’s son Mitzrayim, the progenitor of the Egyptians,) who was the king of Egypt when a man from Babylon named Rakayon impressed the king and his nation with his great wisdom. In the end, Severus renamed Rakayon “Pharaoh” and appointed him the day-to-day ruler of Egypt, while Severus himself remained the ultimate king of Egypt (who would appear in public only once a year). The Egyptians paid special homage to Rakayon by decreeing that all future kings of Egypt should be named Pharaoh.

According to *Sefer HaYashar*, the Pharaoh in the generation after Yosef’s death was Pharaoh Melol. He ruled for ninety-four years. Instead of calling him *Melol*, *Melech Mitzrayim*, the Jews called him *Maror Melech Mitzrayim* because he made the lives of the Jews bitter (*maror*) by enslaving them. Interestingly, Egyptologists have discovered that in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, the same glyph was used for the r-sound and the l-sound. Even more interestingly, some scholars identify Pharaoh Melol with Pharaoh Pepi II, whose alternate name was Merire.

Sefer HaYashar relates that Melol’s successor was his son Pharaoh Adikam. He was also known as Adikam Achuz because *achuz* means “short” in Egyptian and Adikam was only one *amah* (cubit) tall (see also *Mo’ed Katan* 18a). Adikam was a short, ugly fellow whose beard reached to his ankles. It was during Adikam’s reign that the Jews’ Exodus from Egypt happened.

According to *Sefer HaYashar*, *Pharaoh* and *Melech Mitzrayim* were originally two different titles held by different people, but eventually, it seems, those two offices were merged. This, however, does not explain why the Bible sometimes uses one title, sometimes the other, and sometimes both.

The *Zohar* (*Shemot* 17a; 19b) explains that in most of the opening story of the Book of Exodus, the Bible

Continued on page eleven

PRAYER Essentials

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

Adding to the First Three and the Final Three Blessings

A person should not ask for his needs in the first three blessings or last three blessings of the Shemoneh Esrei. This ruling applies specifically to the needs of an individual; however, regarding the needs of the public it is permitted.

• *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 112:1*

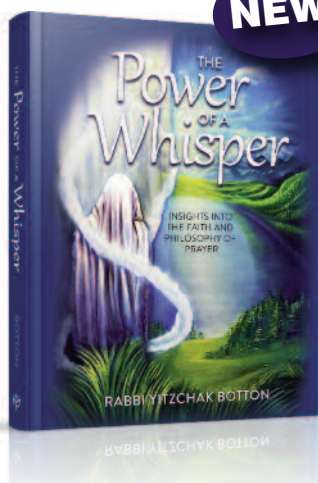
The above ruling is based on a passage in the Talmud: “Rabbi Chanina said: In the first three blessings the worshiper is likened to a servant who offers praise before his master. In the middle blessings he is like a servant requesting an allotment from his master. In the final three blessings he is like a servant who has received his allotment from his master, expressing thanks and gratitude and then departing. (Berachot 34a) The Mishneh Berurah explains that since the first three blessings were designated for praise it is not appropriate to ask for one’s personal needs when reciting them.

The reason it is permitted to make requests for the needs of the public is because it is actually considered a praise and honor to someone when he is needed by the masses (Olat Tamid; Shulchan Aruch HaRav; Mishneh Berurah). It is for this reason that it is also permitted to say *Yaleh v’eyavo* in the blessing of *Modim*, and the requests that are inserted during the High Holidays and Ten Days of Repentance in the first three

blessings. (Beit Yosef) The Aruch HaShulchan writes that this is also the reason why the third blessing “You are holy...” is extended to include requests during the High Holidays. (Dirshu)

Though we find requests in the final three blessings similar to the middle blessings, the Avudraham explains that it does not present a problem because they are all requests that primarily give honor to G-d, like returning the service to the holy Temple, or requests for peace — which increases G-d’s honor. (Dirshu)

The Piskei Teshuvot writes that although it seems from Tosefot (Megillah 4) that one could theoretically add a request in his own words in the first and last three blessings as long as it conforms to the above conditions, the custom today is in accordance with the apparent opinion of the *poskim* (later halachic authorities), to make requests only if they have a set text for everyone, such as “Remember us for life...” and other similar requests.



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE

THE Power OF A Whisper

INSIGHTS INTO THE FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

DISTRIBUTED BY MENUCHA PUBLISHERS

AVAILABLE AT YOUR JEWISH BOOKSTORE OR WWW.OHR.EDU

BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

Foreign But Equal

The first few verses of our *parasha* describe the descent of the Jews into Egyptian slavery and torture. The three distinct phases are apparent in the prophecy to Avraham: “*Your offspring will be foreigners in a land not theirs, and they will enslave them and oppress them.*” (Ber. 15: 13)

First, the Jews were subjected to a labor tax. As aliens of foreign origin, they were made to pay a high price for the very air they breathed. But when these and similar burdensome laws directed at the foreigners did not achieve their objective, the Jews were declared to be slaves. Stripped of their rights, the entire Egyptian populace had authority over them. This soon morphed into an embittered torture, in which they endured daily wanton abuse intended to crush their strength. Thus, all three phases — *foreigners, enslavement, and oppression* — which were foretold to Avraham, were realized.

The beginning, the root, of the unspeakable abuse was *gerut* — treating a foreigner, a stranger, as if he has no rights. This mistreatment is emblazoned in our national memory and finds unusual emphasis in the Torah’s laws. No less than twenty-four times, whenever the Torah establishes rights concerning persons and things, the stranger is placed under the special protection of the law. We are cautioned multiple times to treat the stranger and the convert with equal or greater respect, and in so doing, to remember our experience as foreigners in Egypt. (E.g. *Vayikra 19:34; Shemot 22:20*)

The degree of justice in a country, writes Rav Hirsch, is measured not by the rights accorded to the

native-born, the rich, and the well-connected, but by the justice meted out to the unprotected stranger. This is a basic characteristic of Jewish Law: the homeland does not grant human rights, rather human rights grant the homeland. There is no distinction between citizen’s rights and human rights. Rather, anyone who has accepted upon himself the moral laws of humanity — the seven Noahide laws — could claim the right to live in the Land of Israel.

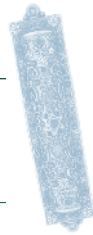
When setting forth this principle, the Torah reminds us, *recall, you were once foreigners in Egypt*. We are to recall how that first injustice — disparate treatment of foreigners — quickly burgeoned into full blown slavery and cruel affliction, and to guard ourselves and our society against such dangerous missteps.

In Rav Hirsch’s view, this principle of equal treatment of foreigners extended even to situations in which the foreigners were less than exemplary citizens. In the wake of the pogroms in Russia, hundreds of Polish and Russian refugees arrived in Frankfurt, some of whom became involved in questionable activities. The Kehilla board wanted to have them expelled from the city for fear that they would arouse antagonism against the Jewish community as a whole. Rav Hirsch would not hear of it. “First throw the wealthy criminals out of the city. Only afterwards can you do the same to the poor ones.”

• Sources: *Commentary, Shemot 1:14*

subscribe @ ohr.edu

to receive Ohrnet directly to your email each week



BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

A Symbol of Faith and Identity

The prominent display of the mezuzah on our doorways is an eternal symbol of Jewish identity on every continent and in every age. Gouged out hollows in the doorways of Vilna, Cordova, Baghdad and other cities around the world wordlessly recount the poignant story of the stops along our people's arduous journey. Even today, as we drive around our cities, we subconsciously keep a lookout for *mezuzot* on doorposts as tell-tale signs of Jewish presence.

But our mezuzah is more than merely a display of Jewish identity. It broadcasts our identification with the fundamental beliefs and principles of our people and its historic destiny. Ramban passionately asserts in his classic Torah commentary:

For he who purchases a mezuzah for a small coin, affixes it to his doorway, and contemplates its message has acknowledged the Creation, Divine Providence, and Prophecy. Indeed, he has proclaimed his belief in all aspects of the Torah.

Rabbeinu Bachya adds that one of the meanings of the Divine Name י-ד-ש is that G-d has the power to override the influence of *mazal* and the laws of nature. Whereas the nations are likely to attribute worldly events to materialistic forces and the whims of fortune, by placing *mezuzot* on our doorways we proclaim that G-d's Providence surrounds us and governs our lives directly.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, in his monumental work *Horeb*, classifies the mitzvah of mezuzah as a "testimony," a symbolic observance which represents truths that form the basis of Jewish life. It shares this designation with Shabbat and Yom Tov, which continually rejuvenate our connection to our historic mission and our destiny:

The Biblical passages "Shema Yisrael" and "V'haya

im shamo'a" should be written on the entrances of every house, thereby hallowing the house (and indeed every place specially set aside for human activities) as an abode where G-d is ever present and where service of G-d is fulfilled, thus testifying that all one's life, all that one endures, is accomplished through G-d.

The significance of the Jewish doorway as both a portal to our inner life and a broadcaster of our identity to the outside emerges right from the dawn of our history. Indeed, at the first Pesach Seder, way down in Egypt land, G-d commanded that we daub the paschal lamb's blood on our doorposts and lintels to mark the inviolate sanctuary of the Jewish home. In our times, as well, the inscription of the Divine Name י-ד-ש on the back of the mezuzah parchment indicates that G-d's presence follows us in all our wanderings. As *Talmud Yerushalmi* teaches:

The Holy One, Blessed be He, has attached His great Name to Israel. This can be compared to a king who possessed a small key to his palace. He said, "If I leave it as it is, it will be lost. I shall make for it a chain, so that if it is lost, its chain will identify it." In the same way, G-d said, "If I leave Israel on their own, they will be swallowed up among the nations. Rather, I will attach my great Name to them, and they shall survive!"

• Sources: Ramban, *Shemot* 13:16; *Kad HaKemach*, *Mezuzah*; *Horeb*, pp. 59 and 187; *Yerushalmi*, *Pei'ah* 2:6

Got a mezuzah question or story?
Email rabbi@ohrsandton.com or submit
on my website mymezuzahstory.com

LISTEN NOW TO RABBI SINCLAIR'S PARSHA PODCASTS

at <http://ohr.edu/podcast>

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

Yona Eisenberg

Age 23 - Los Angeles, CA - Mechina Program

In a landmark article in the Harvard Business Review in 2006, the authors, Herbert Greenberg and David Mayer, outline and analyze the essential elements that make a successful salesman: Empathy and Ego Drive. They conclude that those lacking either should look for employment in another field. Those who are weak in one and strong in the other might have some success, but, ultimately, won't be very successful. However, those who are strong in both elements can become great successes. They compare the salesman with weak empathy for his client, or weak drive to close a deal, to the anti-aircraft guns in WWII, the *ack-ack*. The idea was to fire a great deal of projectiles in the vicinity of an airplane with the hope that you'll hit something. So too, this salesman will make some sales. But the salesman who has strong empathy for his customers and also a strong ego drive to close deals is like a heat-seeking missile. It rarely misses. Yona is a heat-seeking missile.

His background is a bit unusual. His father is a freelance musician from Brazil who moved to the States as an adult. He has played in bands for the Latin Grammy awards, has written music for movies and plays live gigs. His mother is a graphic designer from LA. He has two sisters, the older one in university and a younger one in elementary school.

The family was very secular. While his maternal grandfather was alive they celebrated a very secularized Passover Seder and lit Chanukah candles. After he died five years ago they stopped celebrating any Jewish events.

While still in public high school in the Valley, Yona got a job in a mall kiosk selling Tens units, which are small devices that send tiny electrical impulses into muscles, advertised to relieve pain. He was very good at it, excelling in both empathy with potential customers and eager to close each sale. But, because of the inflated prices that were charged and the "quackish" nature of the product, he didn't feel comfortable about continuing.

After high school he became involved in computer supplies and phone sales. Again, he was very successful. He then moved into the more "respectable" field of insurance sales. He became a licensed insurance agent and investment planner. Again, success followed Yona in that career as well.

His next job was as a loan officer for a financial institution, placing high interest loans with risky small businesses. He was extremely successful in that job as well. By the ripe old age of 23 he had found the success he had been looking

for. He had a home, a car and all the electronic devices he desired. But with all that success he felt empty; his achievements meaningless. He especially felt very disconnected from spirituality. He had always believed that there was G-d in the world, but he had no relationship with Him.

These feelings caused him to lose some of his drive to succeed, and he stopped working as hard as he had been. Among his friends were a number of young men who had grown up in religious homes, but went off the *derech*. They suggested that Yona contact Rabbi Yonason

Quinn of an organization in LA called "Jewish Routes". Rabbi Quinn was the first religious Jew whom Yona had ever met, and Yona was impressed with the rabbi's intelligence and sincerity. He invited Yona to come to a *shiur* that he was teaching in "*Derech Hashem*".

"I was blown away," Yona told me. "How could people know so much about spirituality? I also wanted to know." Jewish Routes maintains a "Yeshiva House" in the Pico-Robertson area of LA, the heart of LA's Jewish community. Yona continued: After

staying in the Yeshiva House for a few months I asked Rabbi Quinn, "You invite me to a *shiur*, you give me great food and set me up with a place to live. Why are you doing all of this for me?" "Because you're Jewish" was his answer. "I felt a spark set off inside me."

After committing himself to keeping Shabbat and mitzvahs, Yona decided it was time to move back into the workforce. He got a job in Orange County in the equipment leasing business. He felt good about this job as it was an honest business, with reputable and stable customers. Again he was very successful. But, as he says, "Almost immediately I felt a hole." He was now out of the Jewish neighborhood. Although he spent his Shabbat with Chabad, he felt he was slacking off religiously.

He asked himself: "What's the point of being on this earth if my only goal is money? And once I have it, why live? I realized that the real goal in life is closeness to Hashem."

Early this past summer, Rabbi Quinn called Yona about a program called "Swissreal". Young Jews from the US go touring in Switzerland and England, and finally to Israel where they learn in the Ohr Somayach JLE program.

"I heard my first Gemara class at Ohr Somayach, and I knew that this is what I was looking for." After six months in Ohr Somayach, Yona says about his experience, "This is the best decision I ever made. The journey is just beginning."



What's In a Word...continued from page six

mentions *Melech Mitzrayim*. This refers to the angelic minister who represents the Egyptian nation in the Heavens. On the other hand, when the Torah refers to *Pharaoh* or *Pharaoh Melech Mitzrayim*, this refers to the human king of the Egyptians. Following this approach, the *Zohar* explains that when the Torah reports "...and *Melech Mitzrayim* died..." (Exodus 2:23), this does not refer to the death of the earthly King of Egypt, but to the removal of the Egyptians' Heavenly minister from its prominence. Only once G-d demoted the Egyptians' Heavenly representative did He begin to listen to the Jews' prayers for redemption.

Rabbeinu Bachaya (to Gen. 41:1) writes that throughout the story of Yosef's interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, the king is only referred to as *Pharaoh* and not *Melech Mitzrayim* because that story was the beginning of Pharaoh's personal downfall, which culminates in the Jews' exodus from Egypt and the Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea. The only exception to this is that when mentioning Yosef's standing in front of Pharaoh, he is called *Pharaoh Melech Mitzrayim* (Gen. 41:46) in order to stress that he was able to remain king only because he listened to Yosef's sagely advice. The drawback of Rabbeinu Bachaya's explanation is that he does not offer an all-encompassing theory as to when the Bible uses *Pharaoh* and when it uses *Melech Mitzrayim* and when it uses both.

Partially basing himself on Rabbeinu Bachaya, Rav

Chaim Kanievsky offers a comprehensive discussion about the three different ways in which the Bible refers to the Pharaoh. He explains that when the Pharaoh was acting on behalf of national interests, then he is referred to as *Melech Mitzrayim*. In contrast, when Pharaoh's actions are motivated by his own, selfish interests (be that his self-aggrandizement or simply his pathological stubbornness), then he is called *Pharaoh*. When both of these factors played a role, then the king is known as *Pharaoh Melech Mitzrayim*.

What does the word *Pharaoh* mean? Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437-1508) and Rabbi Avraham Menachem Rappaport (1520-1596) explain that "Pharaoh" is a term the Bible uses to illustrate the Egyptian king's depravity, and is either a contraction of the Hebrew phrase *po'el ra* ("doer of evil") or *peh ra* ("bad mouth"). Rabbi Eliezer ben Eliyahu Ashkenazi (1515-1585) claims in his work *Ma'ase Hashem* that the Egyptians spoke Latin/Italian. He uses that notion to explain the meaning of the name Pharaoh by arguing that "Pharaoh" means "master" in Italian. (After consulting with experts, we remain unable to confirm this.) Nonetheless, it is virtually a historical fact that the Egyptians spoke Egyptian, not Latin. Academia tends to explain that Pharaoh means "the great house".

Ellyu Nishmat my mother Bracha bat R' Dovid and my grandmother Shprintza bat R' Meir

ASK!...continued from page five

according to your own admission, she continues to have an encouraging influence on his observance. In addition to this there is often a natural tension between father and son, particularly at this age, which does not exist with his mother.

In fact, the verse states (Prov. 1:8), "Hear, my son, the rebuke of your father, and don't relinquish the Torah of your mother." While the father rebukes against sin, the mother extols commitment to observance. And even if a son rejects the rebuke of his father, he may still maintain practice because of his mother. This is the special strength of a mother's influence on her son, which is a result of the special relationship that exists between them.

This may hurt a father, who would naturally prefer to have a special, guiding and inspiring influence on his son. But effective parents realize they are a *team* in which each member contributes unique talents and strengths for the common good. And rather than subconsciously resenting your wife's obvious beneficial

influence on your son, you should encourage and harness it.

No one parent can provide everything his child needs. Consider as an analogy a grown child who needs a significant loan in order to start some constructive endeavor. Most parents don't have the free capital to extend a loan they'd certainly make if they could. But most would do whatever they could to facilitate the loan, and feel grateful toward whomever was able to promote their child's interest in a way the parent himself was not able to.

The same applies here. If the dynamic of this situation renders you currently unable to promote your son's observance, but his mother is able to, you should promote and encourage it. What's more, you should even utilize your wife's relationship with your son and her influence on him as an inroad to repairing your own relationship with him, and as a venue of beneficial, mediated communication between the two of you.

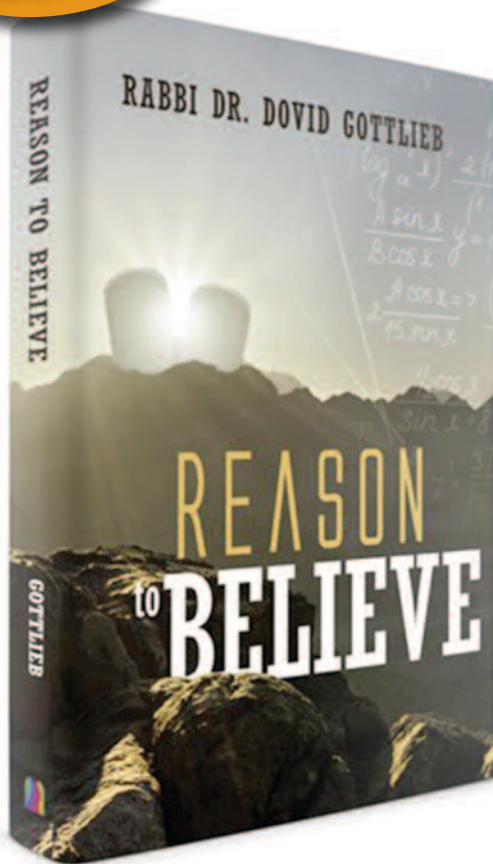
JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY PRESENTS

RABBI DR. DOVID GOTTLIEB

REASON to BELIEVE

KOHN FAMILY EDITION

NEW!



WHY DO WE LIVE THE WAY WE LIVE? WHY DOES ANYONE?

There are hundreds of religions and worldviews in existence, each claiming to be accurate. How do we know that Judaism is true?

In this masterful work, the magnum opus of one of the greatest contemporary teachers of Judaism, readers are guided along an extremely logical, consistent, and convincing path. With this once-in-a-lifetime book, readers discover truth: a powerful "reason to believe."

Published by The Jewish Learning Library of Ohr Somayach

Distributed by Feldheim Publishers

Available online at www.ohr.edu