



JLC NEWS

& Upcoming Events

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SHABBOS INFORMATION

Parshas Shemos
18th-19th Teves, 5772
January 13th-14th, 2012
Candle Lighting: 5:31pm



Shabbos Schedule Bais Peretz Synagogue

Friday, January 13th, 2012

Mincha / Maariv: 5:35pm

Shabbos, January 14th, 2012

Tanya with Rabbi Gordon: 9:25am

JLC Kids Brochos: 9:45am

Shacharit: 10:00am

Kiddush / Lunch: 12:15pm

Talmud with Rabbi Gordon: 4:45pm

Mincha / Kids Torah Time: 5:30pm

Shabbos Ends / Maariv: 6:27pm

FATHER & SON: 7:15pm-8:15pm

Daily Davening Schedule

Shacharit (Sunday-Friday): 9:15am
in the Bais Peretz Synagogue

Mincha (Sunday-Friday): 2:00pm
in the Blima Bas Pinchas Study Hall - 2nd Floor

Maariv (Sunday-Friday): 9:00pm
in the Blima Bas Pinchas Study Hall - 2nd Floor

STORYTIME: THIS MONDAY

Book your place @ www.jlconline.org/storytime
or text name & # of children to 786-333-3043

Next Shabbos:

Parshas Vaeirah, 1/20/2012
Candle Lighting: 5:37pm, Mincha: 5:40pm

This Week at The JLC

Shabbos: Tanya with Rabbi Gordon - 9:25am
Tanya is the fundamental, classic work upon which all concepts of Chabad Chasidism are based.

Shabbos: Talmud Study with Rabbi Gordon
at the JLC - Forty Five Minutes Before Mincha

Motzei Shabbos: Father & Son

At the JLC from 7:15pm-8:15pm

Learning | Pizza | Raffle | Prizes & More

Sunday: Womens Class with Rabbi Lozenik
9:30am at the JLC, 2nd Floor in Blima bas Pinchas Library

TUESDAY: NEW!!!!!!! Mini-Torah & Pizza!

In the JLC, First Floor from 5:00-6:00pm
Torah, games, parsha & fun - What could be better!

Tuesday: Torah & Pizza for Girls
& Pre-Teen Scene for Girls

In the JLC on the 2nd Floor from 6:00-7:15pm
Torah, Craft, Pizza, Games - What could be better!

Wednesday: Mini-Mishmar & Mishmar for Boys

Mini Mishmar (ages 4-7), from 5:00-6:00pm

Mishmar (ages 8-13), from 6:00-7:15pm

Join the fun! Play sports, learn Torah, eat pizza, win prizes!

Monday - Thursday: 1st Grade Hebrew School

In the JLC on the 2nd Floor 2:00pm-4:00pm - Call for Details

The JLC Shabbos Kiddush / Lunch

is sponsored to honor the Yartzeit of
"Homeless Mark"

Mordechai ben Simcha Reuvein obm

The JLC Kids Program

is sponsored by Michael & Jenifer Berstein
in honor of Benjamins Birthday



Parsha In A Nutshell

P*The Children of Israel multiply in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers, Pharaoh enslaves them and orders the Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth. When they do not comply, he commands his people to cast the Hebrew babies into the Nile.*

A child is born to Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, and her husband, Amram, and placed in a basket on the river, while the baby's sister, Miriam, stands watch from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moses.

As a young man, Moses leaves the palace and discovers the hardship of his brethren. He sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and kills the Egyptian. The next day he sees two Jews fighting; when he admonishes them, they reveal his deed of the previous

day, and Moses is forced to flee to Midian. There he rescues Jethro's daughters, marries one of them (Zipporah), and becomes a shepherd of his father-in-law's flocks.

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai, and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." Moses' brother, Aaron, is appointed to serve as his spokesman. In Egypt, Moses and Aaron assemble the elders of Israel to tell them that the time of their redemption has come. The people believe; but Pharaoh refuses to let them go, and even intensifies the suffering of Israel.

Moses returns to G-d to protest: "Why have You done evil to this people?" G-d promises that the redemption is close at hand.

The Haftorah

This week's haftorah parallels the week's Torah reading on many levels. One of the parallels is the message of Redemption conveyed by Isaiah -- "and you shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel" -- that is reminiscent of the message of Redemption that G-d spoke to Moses at the burning bush; a message that Moses then communicated to Pharaoh.

The haftorah vacillates between Isaiah's prophecies concerning the future redemption, and his admonitions concerning the Jews' drunken and G-dless behavior. Isaiah starts on a positive note: "In the coming days, Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom, filling the face of the earth..." He mentions G-d's mercy for His nation and the measure-for-measure punishment He meted out upon the Egyptians who persecuted them. And

regarding the future redemption: "And you shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel. And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great shofar shall be sounded, and those lost in the land of Assyria and those exiled in the land of Egypt shall come and they shall prostrate themselves before the Lord on the holy mount in Jerusalem."

The prophet then proceeds to berate the drunkenness of the Ten Tribes, warning them of the punishment that awaits them. "With the feet, they shall be trampled, the crown of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim..."

The haftorah ends on a positive note: "Now Jacob shall not longer be ashamed, and now his face shall not pale. For, when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, who shall sanctify My name . . . and the God of Israel they shall revere."

Parsha Thought

"And these are the names of the Children of Israel, who were coming to Egypt with Jacob; each man and his household came." (1:1)

Question: After the initial statement "these are the names of the Children of Israel, who were coming to Egypt" the balance of the verse, beginning "with Jacob," seems superfluous.

Answer: When a person marries and raises a family, he is considered the head of the household. The entire family looks up to him for advice and guidance. Often, as he ages and the children mature, they take over the father's position and begin to run all the family affairs. If a major move has to be made, they make the decisions and take their aged parents along with them.

The Torah is attesting that the children of Jacob had the highest respect and

greatest admiration for their father. Though he was already 130 years old and they were in their forties, full of zest and vigor, it was Jacob who led the way, with the rest of the household following.

"Pharaoh commanded all his people saying, 'Every son that is born cast him into the river, and every daughter you shall sustain [keep alive].' " (1:22)

Question: Pharaoh's sole concern was for all the boys to be cast into the river, while the fate of the girls did not seem to interest him. Why did he add, "Every daughter you shall sustain"?

Answer: The word techayun, sustain in Hebrew, means "you shall be the actual source of their life." Pharaoh ordered the Egyptians to cast Jewish children into the river in order to cause their physical death. The same Egyptians were also told by Pharaoh that those children who would remain physically alive (i.e., the girls) were to be sustained by them, that is, assimilated and totally raised in the

Egyptian way of life - in order to exterminate their Jewish souls.

This explains the difference in the command to the Jewish midwives and the Egyptians respectively: The Jewish midwives were simply told to leave the girls alone, "If it be a girl let her live" (1:16). Pharaoh hoped that by telling them to let the girls live, it would be easier for him to persuade them to carry out his order to kill the boys. However, he told the Egyptians "sustain," not just to let the Jewish girls live, but to make sure to assimilate them into Egyptian culture.

The Torah cites both decrees together in the same verse to indicate that "Every daughter you shall sustain" is a decree equivalent in its harshness and even surpassing the decree regarding the boys, "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river." To destroy the soul is equal to the killing the body, and indeed even worse - for spiritual death far surpasses physical death.

Why? by Rabbi Yossy Gordon

Sholom Aleichem. I have a close friend who serves as the chaplain in a very large university medical center. He shared with me how he faces elation and grief on an almost daily basis. I can tell that when he recounts various episodes of his life as a chaplain, he is reliving them as he speaks.

During one of our discussions, he told me how he was asked the age-old question of "Why?" by a family member of a terminally ill patient. Not assuming the role of Divine defense attorney, my friend simply agreed with the bereaved individual. Indeed, it is certainly right to ask. Even when a person, through great personal resolve is somehow able to put a positive spin on human suffering, the question of "Why?" still stands.

When the Previous Rebbe was arrested in Communist Russia and things seemed bleak, he allowed himself to cry for himself and his family. He quickly calmed himself with belief that all is from G-d. But at first he cried. He permitted himself the grief.

In this week's Torah portion, Parshas Shemos, our teacher Moshe comes onto the scene in Egypt where the Jewish People are ruthlessly enslaved. Moshe is called upon by G-d to redeem the Jewish People. After G-d deals with his initial reluctance, Moshe sets off to Egypt. His brother Aaron meets him and together they head towards Pharaoh's palace.

Undaunted by their fearsome surroundings, Moshe demands the immediate release of his brethren. Pharaoh scoffs at G-d, at Moshe and Aaron, and at his request. Not only does he scoff, the scoundrel even increases the workload on the unfortunate Jews. After Moshe's visit, the Egyptians stop providing straw for the Jews to make into bricks. Now the Jews will have to procure their own straw with the brick production quota remaining the same!

Soon Moshe addresses G-d: "My G-d, why have You done evil to this nation?! Why have You sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done worse to this nation; and You have not saved Your people." G-d answers: "Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh." G-d then continues to reiterate the promises He made to our forefathers, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, to redeem His people and bring them to the Promised Land.

Commentary explains that G-d's answer to Moshe was that all that was happening to the Jews was a preparation for the ultimate redemption. Just before the dawn it is darkest, similarly, just before the redemption the exile is the harshest.

Now that answer might be satisfactory from G-d's perspective. But for those people whom Pharaoh was torturing, this was little consolation.

The Rebbe clarifies: The Torah is everlasting. Even a question that is asked in the Torah is everlasting. So Moshe asks a question. G-d answers. The answer seems to leave questions open. Namely, why couldn't G-d figure out a way of preparing for the good things to come without the pain along the way? Bottom Line: Our acceptance of Divine Will coupled with our inability to understand Him does not negate our question!

The anguished family member in the medical center was absolutely legitimate! Let us ask G-d to give the answer which we all can agree upon; end the suffering and send us Moshiach speedily!

Postscript: This Torah Thought is in honor of the memory of my friend Hanoach who left us this week so tragically. May his soul be bound in the bond of everlasting life!

Mark Wasn't Homeless! by Rabbi Yossy Gordon

Sholom Aleichem. If G-d Almighty made it, it has a purpose. This is true for everything from insects to human beings. Certainly everyone plays a different role. In fact, Chassidic teaching explain that every single part of Creation is a vital and integral part of the Creator's Plan.

In our community of Miami Beach there was a Jew named Mark. Highly intelligent and well educated, Mark was a person who had a lot to give in life. Yet, he struggled with his personal challenges which brought him to live an unsettled life.

According to thesaurus.com the opposite of homeless is settled. This seems strange because many people who have

homes yet are unsettled and many homeless people who are quite settled.

Mark had nothing more than the shirt on his back and his sense of humor. He was generous with his smile and quick with a humorous line. Incredibly, Mark found a way to be generous in more ways than just in spirit. One could often see Mark walking the streets of Miami Beach without shoes on his feet. It happened more than once that kind people stopped him and gave him shoes to wear which he gratefully accepted. But often the very next day he was shoeless again. Mark explained that he met an unfortunate individual who didn't have shoes so he gave his away!

Whenever Mark took food for himself he always set aside a portion to share with people he knew who were hungry and unable to fend for themselves. At one point, Mark decided he had enough of living in Miami Beach and wanted to relocate. A kind friend offered to pay his expenses to his new locale but Mark didn't go. When asked why he matter of factly explained that there was another person who depended on him to bring her food and he couldn't leave her to starve!

Mark may have been homeless but he was not unsettled. In fact, if the opposite of homeless is unsettled then we can conclude that someone who is settled has a home. Though

Mark did not possess a home on this earthly plane, he certainly possesses one in the Heavenly realms where his soul made its way to four years ago. Mark's 5th yartzeit is this Shabbos, the 19th of Teves.

Let's do a mitzvah in honor of Mordechai ben Simcha Reuvein and certainly G-d Almighty will grant his soul even greater heights Above and we will enjoy even greater blessing and sense of mattering here below. Live long and prosper!

May the soul of Mordechai ben Simcha Reuvein be bound in the bond of everlasting life. L'Chaim!

- On The Lighter Side -

Rachel decides to do some shopping at and manages to persuade her husband Moishe to join her. After 2 hours of looking around one women's clothes store after another, Rachel suddenly realises that Moishe is no longer with her. So she calls him on his cell phone to see 'what's what.'

"So where are you?" she angrily asks Moishe. "I thought we were shopping together."

"Don't get broyges, darling," replies Moishe. "Do you remember the jewellery shop by the escalator in the middle of the mall, the one we spent time in last year and where we saw a lovely gold necklace for you but which was just a little bit too expensive for us to buy and where I said I would get it for you one day?"

"Yes, of course I do, darling" replies Rachel excitedly. "Why do you ask?"

"Well I'm in the Cafe next door to that jewellery store eating an ice cream."

* * *

A Swiss tourist is traveling through Chelm and looking for directions, he pulls up at a bus stop where Chaim and Yankel are waiting. "Entschuldigung, koennen Sie Deutsch sprechen?" he asks.

Chaim and Yankel just stare at him.

"Excusez-moi, parlez vous Francais?" he tries. The two continue to stare. "Parlare Italiano?" No response. "Hablan ustededs Espanol?" Still nothing.

The Swiss tourist finally drives off, frustrated. Chaim turns to Yankel and says, "You know, maybe we should learn a foreign language."

"Why?" says Yankel. "That guy knew four languages, and it didn't do him any good."

* * *

A Cop pulled a car over for speeding.

When the Cop asked the driver why he was traveling 95mph,

the driver answered that he was a juggler on his way to do a show for a birthday party and didn't want to be late.

The Cop told the driver he was fascinated by juggling, and if the driver would do a little juggling for him that he wouldn't give him a ticket.

The driver told the Cop that he had sent all of his equipment on ahead and didn't have anything to juggle.

The Cop told him that he had some flares in the trunk of his patrol car, and asked if he could juggle them.

The juggler stated that he could, so the Cop got three flares, lit them and handed them to the juggler.

While the man was doing his juggling act, a car pulled in behind the patrol car.

A drunk got out, watched the performance briefly, went over to the patrol car, opened the rear door and got in.

The Cop observed him doing this, and went over to the patrol car, opened the door and asked the drunk what he thought he was doing.

The drunk replied, "You might as well haul me to jail, cause there's NO way I'll pass that test."

* * *

There were three fathers to be in a hospital waiting room, waiting for their babies to be born.

The first nurse comes out and tells the first father, "Congratulations you're the father of twins!" He says, "Great! I am the manager for the Minnesota Twins."

The second nurse comes out and tells the second father, "Congratulations you're the father of triplets!" He says, "That's cool! I work for 3M."

The third father opens the window and jumps out.

The third nurse comes out, and asks, "Where's the third father?"

One of the other fathers said, "Oh he jumped out the window."

The nurse asks, "Why?"

He replied, "He works for Seven Up!"

Why Do We Fight So Much?

Moses Faced Two Enemies: One He Could Handle; the other Eluded Him

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

The War Is Over?

A man in Germany felt that he needed to confess, so he went to his priest. "Forgive me Father, for I have sinned. During World War Two, I hid a Jew in my attic."

"Well," answered the priest, "that's not a sin."

"But I made him agree to pay me \$50 for every week he stayed."

"I admit that wasn't good, but you did it for a good cause."

"Oh, thank you, Father; that eases my mind. I have one more question..."

"What is that, my son?"

"Do I have to tell him the war is over?"

Two Incidents of Violence

In this week's portion (Shemos) the Hebrew Bible introduces us to Moses, through two incidents (Exodus, Chapter 2):

"It happened in those days that Moses grew up and he went out to his brethren and observed their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brethren. He turned this way and that way and he saw that there was no man, so he struck down the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."

The Bible continues:

"He went out the next day, and behold! Two Hebrew men were fighting. He said to the wicked one, 'Why would you strike your fellow?' He replied: 'Who appointed you as a prince and leader over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' Moses was frightened."

As a result, he escapes from Egypt. Only later would he return to the country and liberate his people from slavery.

It is no coincidence that these are the only two vignettes the Bible shares with us concerning Moses' youth in Egypt, and that the Bible emphasizes that these two episodes occurred during two consecutive days. It seems that these two episodes somehow encapsulate Moses' life-mission and destiny; they seem to capture his particular story. How so?

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

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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 is 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 told: "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 up 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 moment of crisis when we need each other most but the trust has been eroded.

The Jewish people has often been threatened by hostile civilizations, from ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century, and by fundamentalist Islam in our own times. But the most fateful injuries have

been those the Jewish people has inflicted on itself: the division of the kingdom in the days of the First Temple, which brought about the eventual defeat of both halves and the loss of ten of the twelve tribes; the internecine rivalry in the last days of the Second Temple, which brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the longest exile in Jewish—indeed, in human—history.

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 is dim.

Today, in 2012, 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 consensus concerning Ahmadinejad 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?

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The Origins of Moses' Name

by Rabbi Mendel kalmenson

Rabbi Wolfe of Zbarazh was a Chasidic master known for his eagerness to defend the poor and the victimized.

One day, he heard unpleasant sounds coming from the kitchen. Putting aside the book he was studying, he went to find out what was happening there. His wife was having a disagreement with the maid. "She broke an expensive dish," the annoyed Rebbetzin explained to him.

"It was an accident," cried the maid.

"No, she did it on purpose, to annoy me, and I'm going to deduct it from her wages," countered the Rebbetzin.

"Then I shall go to the rabbinic court," said the maid.

"Go ahead, and I'll come too!" said the Rebbetzin.

"And me too," said her husband.

"You? Why are you coming? I don't need you there."

"She does," said Rabbi Wolfe, "you are the wife of a Rebbe; she is only a poor maid. She needs me to defend her."

A Name-Check

One of the greatest enigmas in the Bible concerns the name of its most oft-mentioned character, Moses.

The name Moses is mentioned 740 times in the Five Books of Moses, and 770 times throughout all of Scripture. Yet "Moses" was not his given name... Among all of the heavyweights mentioned in the Bible, Moses' name stands out due to its unusual origins.

"Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe by the river... She saw a basket among the reeds... She opened it and saw a boy crying...and he was a son to her. She called his name Moses, as she said, 'For I drew him from the water.'"¹

It turns out that the name the Torah elected to call its key player was the one given him by Pharaoh's daughter!

Why?

It's not as if his parents neglected to name him. The Midrash² records four names he was given at birth, one by each of his family members. One of these names was Tuvyah, which means good, for "She [his mother] saw that he was good."³

So what possessed the Torah to ignore the name given him by his pious parents at birth, using instead the name given him by a stranger?

This question intensifies according to the mystical teaching that one's name is not just utilitarian and random, but is inherently intertwined with the make-up of the name-bearer's soul and destiny.

If that's the case, doesn't the name Tuvyah – which means goodness – encapsulate Moses' essence and lifetime more than the name Moses, which commemorates but a single (albeit lifesaving) episode in his life?

Sacrificial Choices

Moses had it made.

He was being groomed for nobility and honor. His every whim was tended to, and he was pampered with all sorts of luxuries. He was adored by all of Egypt, having been recognized as a brilliant young man who possessed vision and courage. He was the people's prince and was headed towards a bright political future.

But he never quite got there, or at least he took a different route.

Incident #1:

"It happened in those days that Moses grew up and went out to his brethren and saw their burdens..."⁴

According to our Sages,⁵ the day of Moses' fateful stroll was the day he was made responsible over Pharaoh's entire household. After being doted upon and sheltered his entire life, on that day, for the first time, he ventured outside the cushioned palace environment he was accustomed to into the real world, where injustice flourished and suffering was rampant.

"And he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man."

For the first time in his young life he came face-to-face with an oppressor and a victim, and he had to choose between them.

To side with a member of the lowest caste against a "fellow" member of the all-highest would not be seen positively back at the palace, nor by the commoners on the street. More than just committing career-suicide, or even more, forfeiting a life of opulence, by acting against an Egyptian overseer on behalf of a Hebrew slave, Moses was endangering his life!

Yet he didn't think twice, but "struck the Egyptian down and hid him in the sand."

This was how his first day outside the palace ended.

Incident #2:

"He went out the next day, and behold! Two Hebrew men were fighting."⁶

Moses could have left them to their fighting. After all, the murder of an innocent man was not at stake this time; it was merely somelsraelite in-fighting. And yet, he didn't think twice but "said to the wicked one, 'Why would you strike your fellow?'"

This deed would cost him dearly.

"Who made you a man, a ruler, and a judge over us?" replied the Hebrew he had rebuked. "Are you saying that you are going to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses was frightened, and he thought, "Indeed, the matter has become known."

His fears would prove to be well founded. "Pharaoh heard about this matter and sought to kill Moses; so Moses fled from before Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian. He sat at the well."

This was how his second day outside the palace ended.

A few days later would be much the same.

Incident #3:

"The minister of Midian had seven daughters; they came and

drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's sheep. The shepherds came out and drove them away [for their family had been excommunicated by the Midianites]."7

Now, the voice of logic, coupled with instincts of self-preservation, might well have argued against getting involved in this bout of local politics, especially if that involvement would align him with a family of social outcasts, yet that didn't stop Moses from standing up for those being wronged.

"Moses got up and saved them, and watered their sheep."

A pattern emerges.

So much must have happened in young Moses' life until this point, and yet the Torah, being a work of instruction rather than history, saw fit to record only these pitifully few incidents.

Mind you, it can be argued that all three incidents are irrelevant to the story. For the story to be cohesive, all we need to know is that Pharaoh sought to kill Moses and that Moses got away. The question of why Pharaoh sought to kill Moses⁸ is nothing but gossip.

In truth, however, it can be said that precisely these events capture the spirit of Moses. For each of three episodes outlined are in reality just different expressions of the same characteristic.

Moses identified with the victim, the disadvantaged, the oppressed. At the risk of his own comfort and even his life, he never stood idly by as someone was being hurt.

In each of the documented incidents, the faces of the persecutor and the persecuted may have changed, but Moses did not. He always took the side of the sufferer.

This pattern is illustrated even more clearly by the next occurrence in Moses' life which the Torah chose to record:

"Moses was grazing the sheep of his father-in-law... He saw a burning bush that wasn't being consumed... G d said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt...and now, go, and I will send you to Pharaoh and you shall take my people out of Egypt!'"

To go back to the land where he was wanted for murder?

To confront and rebel against his step-grandfather, Pharaoh, the

man who treated him like a son, and brought him up with love?

To embrace and redeem the people who turned him in to the authorities, facilitating his stint on death row?

Besides, hadn't his life finally settled? He'd recently married, had a kid, gotten a job; life was good, so why spoil it?

Because a people was being oppressed in the land of Egypt.

The name Moses now seems to fit him like a glove, for it points to the very beginning of this pattern.

"Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe by the river... She saw a basket among the reeds... She opened it and saw a boy crying. She took pity on him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrew boys,'...and he was a son to her."

When the princess of Egypt first laid on eyes on little Moses, he was quite literally a basket-case. But he was also a Hebrew slave-child, whom her father had decreed should be drowned.

Taking the child in would thus be very risky. Keeping his identity secret would be nearly impossible, especially with all of the palace chitchat.

Yet she didn't hesitate to extend herself towards the victim-child of a victim-people, and "drew him out of the water."⁹

How fitting a name for Moses,¹⁰ who would grow to do the same for others.¹¹

Based on Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 1 pp. 784-788.

Footnotes:

1. Exodus 2:5-10. 2. Yalkut Shimoni, Exodus 161. See also Midrash Rabbah, Leviticus 1:3.

3. Exodus 2:2. "The goodness referred to is that when he was born the entire house became filled with light" – Rashi ad loc.

4. Ibid. 2:11. 5. Tanchuma Yashan, Va'eira 17. 6. Exodus 2:13.

7. Ibid. 2:16 and Rashi ad loc. 8. The question of how Pharaoh found out that Moses killed the Egyptian (see Rashi on 2:15) is also irrelevant.

9. In the words of the Midrash, which explains how she got the name Batya, meaning "daughter of G d": "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: 'Moses was not your son, yet you called him your son. You are not My daughter, but I shall call you my daughter.'"

10. See Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 1:26.

11. Indeed, according to Midrash Hagadol, Moses was thus named because "he drew others out."

Thank you for all those who came to honor the Yahrtzeit of "Homeless Mark" by participating in packing 100 sandwiches and other foods that were then distributed to the poor & homeless.



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