

PARSHAS SHEMOS

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת שמות

January 4, 2024 / כ"ג טבת תשפ"ד



Thursday, January 11, 2024

שבת מברכים ראש חודש שבט -

Rosh Chodesh Shvat is only one day. Since the month of Teves always is חודש חסר - has twenty-nine days, and Shvat is always a חודש מלא - contains thirty days.

The holy Sanzer Rav zt"l used to be very happy as he conducted a seudah to celebrate Rosh Chodesh Shvat. He used to say that from Rosh Chodesh Shvat until Shavous, we celebrate a Yom Tov every two weeks.

Rosh Chodesh Shvat, Tu B'Shvat, Rosh Chodesh Adar, Purim, Rosh Chodesh Nissan, Pesach, Rosh Chodesh Iyur, Pesach Sheini, Rosh Chodesh Sivan, and Shavous.

שובבי"ם Start of

ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את יעקב איש וביתו באו (שמות א:א)

And these are the names of the Children of Israel who were coming to Egypt: with Yakov, each man and his household came.

The six weeks starting from פרשת שמות thru פרשת תצוה is called ימי שובבי"ם ת"ת

The days of שובבי"ם are alluded to in this week's parsha. The acronym of ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה is שובבי"ם. For then start the שובבי"ם days. The end letters of ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה equals תשובה - these parshas are destined to do teshuvah. The 'ה' from the word ואלה isn't a main letter; therefore, the 'ב' is included in the acronym. However, the 'ה' alludes to the fact that the fifth day - Thursday

of each שובבי"ם week is the primary day to do teshuvah, and many fast on Thursday during שובבי"ם.

The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l said that one needs to fast שובבי"ם, but if one can't fast, he should take upon himself something, and the most significant act is to be a יראי שמים - fear Hashem.

Reb Elimelech Biderman shlita relates that his holy grandfather, the Lelover Rebbe zt"l, advised a young bochor who asked for a bracha during שובבי"ם for שמירת עינים - to protect his eyes. "לייג דיין אויגן און א גמרא-רש"י" - put your eyes in the Gemara, Rashi...The Lelover also advised a young man who wanted to fast during שובבי"ם, "Why do you need to accept upon yourself to fast, which is a 'smaller' act, accept upon yourself the holy Gemara, which is a so much 'greater' act."



Everyone loves a good story, especially a Chassidic story...

יעבידו מצרים את בני ישראל בפרך (שמות א:יג)
The Egyptians enslaved the Yidden with crushing harshness

Sefer Shemos talks about גלות מצרים - the Yidden's exile in Mitzrayim. So why did Hashem

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give the Torah to the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel after they suffered harsh years in Mitzrayim? It can be explained with a parable.

A wealthy Yid raised an orphan in his home from when he was a baby until his Bar Mitzvah. The orphan was treated like the other children in the house and took his accommodations for granted. One day, a poor man knocked at a wealthy person's house, and the rich Yid gave him a generous donation of one hundred dollars. The poor man didn't expect such a gracious donation and heaped the wealthy Yid with blessings.

The rich Yid's wife heard all the poor man's brachos and thanks and asked her husband, "Why doesn't the orphan thank us like that? It seems that he thinks he's deserving of all?"

The wealthy Yid summoned the orphan and told him that I provided you with food, drink, clothes, and shelter. But since you are older, you will need to fend for yourself and surely be successful.

The orphan looked at the Yid to see if he really meant it. But the wealthy Yid said that, yes, he means it literally. The orphan packed his bag and started his journey, searching for food and a home where to sleep overnight. He started earning money by carrying other people's packages and sleeping in a corner of the road where people weren't around.

After three days, the wealthy Yid sent his servant to find the orphan. The orphan came, and the Yid told him, "I see the change is hard for you to try and fend for yourself." He then ordered his servants to prepare the table with good food since the orphan had hungered the past three days. Following each spoonful, the orphan sat down to eat and thanked his host and family for the chesed they did by bringing him back home.

The wealthy Yid told his wife, "Now you see that the orphan acknowledges everything he received.

As long as the orphan thought he deserved it all, he didn't relate to thank. But now, he understands all the good we do for him."

The same is true with the Yidden. If Hashem had brought the Yidden into Eretz Yisroel and given them the Torah, Mitzvahs, and all good things, the Yidden wouldn't have acknowledged all the good. Therefore, Hashem sent the Yidden first to Mitzrayim, where they suffered so that they could recognize the goods Hashem bestowed upon them and thank Him for it.

האלך וקראתי לך אשה מינקת מן העבריות (שמות ב:ז)
Shall I go and summon a wet nurse from the Hebrew women?

A woman once came to the Baal Shem Tov zt'l and cried that she had married for a long time and didn't merit children. The Baal Shem Tov blessed her, and within a year, the woman gave birth to a son.

When the boy turned two years old, the parents brought the child to the Baal Shem Tov for a bracha. The Baal Shem Tov placed the child on his lap, kissed him, and returned him to his parents.

A short while later, tragedy struck. The child passed away. The pained parents came to the Baal Shem Tov crying and shared their tragedy. The Baal Shem Tov consoled them by sharing a story.

"A king owned a huge palace with many servants, advisors, and riches. One day, he summoned his chief advisor and asked, "Who will inherit my kingdom if I don't have children? I'm thinking of asking the Jews to pray for me for a child, and then I'll absolve them from taxes."

The chief advisor replied, "The king should rather tell the Jews that if by the end of the year, the king

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EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY, ESPECIALLY A CHASSIDISHE STORY *continued*

isn't blessed with a child, he will expel them from the land."

The king accepted his advice and informed the Jews that if a child weren't born to him, he would expel them. The Yidden gathered together. They did teshuvah and cried and prayed to Hashem to help the king on their behalf. Their prayers were accepted, and the king had a baby boy.

The king hired the head priest to learn with the prince when the child grew older. The priest asked that the king allow him two hours of private time in a locked room so that he could study by himself. The king agreed, and the priest and the prince formed a beautiful study partnership.

One day, the prince was curious to see what the priest did behind locked doors during those two hours. He found the key to the room and quietly opened the door. He was shocked to find the priest draped in a tallis and tefillin. The priest fainted from shock, but the prince quickly revived him and asked for an explanation. The priest swore him to secrecy, and from then on, the two started learning the Torah together.

With time, the prince was aroused to the light of the Torah and wanted to travel far away to convert to Judaism. The priest advised him to tell the king he wanted to learn different wisdom from other countries and ease the separation between father and son. He will separate from his father a little bit more each day. With time, the king won't miss his son anymore.

The prince did so, and after some time, he traveled to a different country where he converted and became an ehrliche Yid. They all spoke well about him, and when he passed away and faced the Beis Din Shel Malah (the heavenly courts),

one Malach (angel) commented that since he was nursed by a non-Jew for the first few years of his life, his neshama needs to return to earth for that period as a tikkun - to make amends."

The Baal Shem Tov concluded, "You, dear parents, were chosen to have such a holy neshama in your home for two years. These two years passed, and his neshama's tikkun was accepted!"

ולא עשו כאשר דבר אליהו מלך מצרים ותחיין את הילדים (שמות א:יז)
And they did not do as the king of Egypt spoke to them, and they caused the boys to live.

One of the Chofetz Chaim's zt"l talmidim was asked to serve as a Rav in one of the Lithuanian cities. The Talmid was a great Yiras Shamayim and feared accepting the Rabbinical position, for he feared that he might give a verdict that was against the Torah. When the heads of the Kehilla - community begged him to accept, the talmid traveled to Radin to consult with the Chofetz Chaim.

The talmid presented his argument to him, and the Chofetz Chaim responded. "In Parshas Shemos, it says that Pharaoh decreed upon the midwives to kill all newly born Yiddish boys. But the midwives feared Hashem and didn't listen to Pharaoh. In essence, why didn't the midwives resign from their position after Pharaoh's decree - so they wouldn't have to obey Pharaoh?"

"What then did they do?" continued the Chofetz Chaim. "The Yiddish midwives thought to themselves that if they resigned from their position, then Pharaoh would hire non-Jewish midwives who would kill those boys. Therefore, they continued their task with Mesiras Nefesh (great sacrifice) and defied Paroh's decree."

Concluded the Chofetz Chaim. "The same is with you. Who knows what kind of Rav will take over your position if you won't accept the rabbinical position?"

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THIS WEEK'S VORT

פרשת שמות

ויאמר אל עמו הנה עם בני ישראל רב ועצום ממנו (שמות א:ט)
He said to his people, "Behold! The Children of Israel are more numerous and stronger than we are."

ל - when the Yidden keep together as one nation, and there's no fighting, then, רב ועצום - they are very big and strong, and no other nation can conquer them.

ותשלח את אמתה ותקחה (שמות ב:ה)
She sent her maidservant, and she took it.

The Gemara explains (סוטה יב) that the phrase אמתה means - a measurement. Her hand stretched a lot of Amos. We must understand: if the box was so far away, why did Basya even attempt to take it? She knew she couldn't reach it. We learn from here that when one wants to do good for others or perform a mitzvah, even though it seems impossible, one should attempt to do what he can, and Hashem will help with the rest. Because Basya wanted to perform a mitzvah, a miracle occurred: Her hand-stretched and reached the box containing Moshe.

ותעל שועתם אל האלקים (שמות ב:כג)
Their outcry because of their work went up to Hashem.

ותעל שועתם - that the main outcry of the Yidden in Mitzrayim was because of האלקים - Hashem's honor. Since the Egyptians didn't allow the Yiden to serve Hashem, they disturbed their Avodas Hashem, which they

mainly cried about.

I shall grant these people favor in the eyes of Egypt. So that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

The Medrash explains that the Yidden became rich when Hashem gave the Makkos-plagues to the Mitzriyim. The acronym of כי תלכוון מצרים והי' לא תלכוון ריקם is the word מכות. The pasuk ends - through the Makkos, they won't go out empty since they will become rich.

ושאלה אשה משכנתה... ושמלות ושמתם על בניכם ועל בנותיכם (שמות ג:כב)
Each woman shall request from her neighbor... you shall put them on your sons and daughters.

Why doesn't it say ואת בניכם ואת בנותיכם - they shall clothe themselves and their children?

Why would it only be suitable for their children? The garment would need alterations since non-Jewish clothes are typically short for an adult. Therefore it says ואת בניכם ועל בנותיכם - as the clothes length would only be suitable for children.



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