



Parshas Shemos

December 24, 2021

## A Taste of Torah

### A Lengthy Exit

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

The Book of Shemos, which we begin this week, is also known as *Sefer Hage'ulah*, or by the better-known Greek term of that title, the Book of Exodus. One would expect, then, that the entire book focuses on the exile, slavery and suffering of the nascent Jewish Nation in Egypt and the subsequent miraculous deliverance and redemption wrought by Hashem.

Strangely, that is far from the case. The actual Egyptian part of the story ends about halfway through Parshas Beshalach, barely a third of the way through the Book of Shemos! What follows is the narrative of the early stages of the Jewish Nation's sojourn in the desert, the Giving of the Torah, and the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). Oh, and there's also that matter of the idolatrous Golden Calf and its fallout. How are we to understand, then, the name of *Sefer Hage'ulah* if most of the Book is not about the Exodus?

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman; 1194-1270) explains that we have the Exodus all wrong. The Book of Bereishis focuses on the formation of the foundations of the Jewish Nation: The Patriarchs and Matriarchs and the Twelve Tribes. These great people succeeded, through enormous effort, to bring the *Shechina*, the Divine Presence of Hashem, into their midst. When the fledgling nation of seventy souls entered the Egyptian exile, that special connection was lost. This is part and parcel of the process of exile; it is defined by the hiddenness of Hashem's presence.

With the redemption from Egyptian

bondage, the Jewish People began the process of re-attaining the supernal spiritual existence of their ancestors. The ultimate goal of this process was for the *Shechina* to again dwell in their midst, as it had for their forebears centuries earlier. This did not happen merely with the actual departure from Egypt. It did not happen with the Splitting of the Sea. It did not happen when the Torah was given. These were all steps in building a relationship with Hashem that would allow the *Shechina* to reside among the Jewish People. The Golden Calf was a serious setback, which the Nation ultimately overcame as they were given the opportunity to repair the relationship. But the *Shechina* only came to reside on a constant basis within the Jewish People with the completion of the *Mishkan*. Thus, says the Ramban, the full Exodus and the completion of the redemption was not realized until the *Shechina* came to reside in the *Mishkan* - which becomes reality only at the very end of Sefer Shemos.

Rabbi Yissochor Rothschild in *Sefer Bima'agelei Yosher* provides further insight into the journey that is the Book of Shemos. Based on various verses in *Shir Hashirim* (Song of Songs), he notes that there are three basic descriptions of the loving relationship between Hashem and the Jewish People: Hashem is a father who cares for His children, Hashem is "married", so to speak, to His "bride" the Jewish People, and the Jewish People "provide," so to speak, for Hashem.

Rabbi Rothschild explains that there is a progression through these

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## Stories for the Soul

### Better to Go Hungry

Rabbi Yaakov Hopfer, formerly Rav of Cong. Zera Avraham of Denver and currently a prominent Rav in Baltimore, attended a meeting of a number of charity organizations in Baltimore. The meeting was hosted in the home of a member of the community. The committee was discussing the best way to distribute funds and who should receive the money.

The host had placed refreshments on the tables, but Rabbi Hopfer had not partaken of any of the food or drink. Despite several offers from the host to eat or drink something, Rabbi Hopfer kept declining. The host started to wonder why the great rabbi was not eating his food.

Rabbi Hopfer explained his actions. "We are here discussing so many sad stories, so many people who need our help financially and otherwise. I feel that if I refrain from eating, and I experience a bit of hunger and discomfort, I'll be better equipped to make decisions concerning these poverty-stricken individuals."

Rashi tells us that although Moshe was a prince in the house of Pharaoh, when he saw the sufferings of his Jewish brethren, he suffered along with them. We, too, must not ignore the plight of others, even though we ourselves may not directly be affected by their problems.

## Kollel Happenings

### LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING ON DEC. 31

The Kollel's Legal Holiday Learning program continues on Friday Dec. 31 in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Breakfast at 8:45 at the West Denver Kollel Torah Center (*shacharis* at 7) and at Aish of the Rockies (*shacharis* at 7:30) followed by learning. December 31 topic: *New Year's Resolution: Resolving Whether One May Celebrate the Secular New Year*. For sponsorship opportunities and more info, email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### M.B. GLASSMAN DIVISION GOLD SENIOR LUNCH & LEARN MONDAYS AT EDOS

The GOLD Lunch & Learn for seniors is back at EDOS, 198 S. Holly St., on most Mondays at 12 noon. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Class is available on Zoom, as well. For info, to confirm there is a class or for Zoom link info, email [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org).

### TALMUDO BIYADO GEMARA CLUB FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Learn, review, and acquire a masechta! Boys in grades 6-8 are invited to join Rabbi Chaim Gross at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochor weeknights Mon.-Thu. from 8-8:30 pm for a Gemara shiur followed by review. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at [rnk@denverkollel.org](mailto:rnk@denverkollel.org) for further details.

## Halacha Riddles

**Last week's question:** How is it possible for three people to make a *mezuman* if they are Sefardim but not if they are Ashkenazim?

**Answer:** If one of the three is a *katan* (minor) at least six or seven years old (i.e., mature enough to participate). The Shulchan Aruch, generally followed by Sefardim, rules that if there are two adults, one such minor can complete the requisite group of three males; if there are nine adults, he completes the group of ten for Hashem's Name to be included. Only

one minor may be counted, not more (Mishna Berura *ibid.*:25). (The Magen Avraham [*ibid.*:6] says the *katan* must be nine or ten years old. See, however, Mishna Berura *ibid.*:24.)

The Rema (*ibid.*), generally followed by Ashkenazim, argues and says that only an adult (i.e., thirteen years old) may complete the group.

**This week's question:** How is it possible for one person to be part of a *mezuman* multiple times during the course of a single meal?

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XXXI

During the course of the aforementioned *Knessia Gedola*, Rabbi Shapiro promoted a second dream he had harbored for some time: To open a yeshiva.

There were many yeshivos in Europe

at the time, particularly in the *litvishe* (Lithuanian), non-Chassidic community. These yeshivos attracted thousands of young men in their teens from across Europe and even from the United States.

## A Taste of Torah

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three levels of relationship through the Book of Shemos. The first level of relationship, that of a father and children, was expressed during the exile and redemption from Egypt until the Jewish People arrived at Sinai. The Giving of the Torah at Sinai is viewed as the "wedding" between Hashem and the Jewish People; upon receiving the Torah and committing to observe and study it, the Jewish People created a bond of marriage with Hashem. The Golden Calf is viewed as a most egregious act of infidelity, but one which Hashem was willing to forgive. Later, when they constructed a *Mishkan*, the Jewish People provided a home, so to speak, for Hashem's *Shechina* to reside within the confines of this world; this is the realization of the third phase.

Tying together the Ramban's words

with this progression of relationship, it becomes clear that the Jewish People, as they embarked on a journey to recreate the spiritual reality that had existed for the founders of the Nation, gradually grew into the role of Hashem's Chosen People. As we, today, begin our journey, week to week, through the Book of Shemos, let us reflect upon incorporating the different aspects of our relationship with Hashem, as well, into our lives: a child who depends completely on the love and largesse of his Father; a loving couple, committed to each other through thick and thin; and finally, of providing Hashem, so to speak, the ability to reveal Himself in this world by making it a place of goodness and holiness through our study of Torah and the fulfillment of its mitzvos.

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