



Parshas Shemos 2019, every Jew's importance

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Shaul Ben Berta, and Lior Gabay Ben Michal.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.

Our Parsha starts off by giving us some context to the Jewish people's situation. Yosef and all his brothers had passed on, and a new Pharaoh became king over Egypt who did not want to acknowledge Yosef and his accomplishments. As the Jewish people began to flourish and prosper, the new ruler became fearful of their growing numbers, and resolved to find a solution to the "*Jewish problem.*"

His strategy was to burden the Jewish people with so much work that they would have no time to have more children. However, G-d had different plans — the Pasuk says, (1:12) "*As much as the Egyptians would afflict them, so did they multiply and grow in strength.*"

Pharaoh then commanded that all of the newborn baby boys were to be thrown into the Nile River. When Moshe Rabbeinu was born, his mother put him in a waterproof basket set him afloat under the watchful eyes of his older sister, Miriam.

Pharaoh's daughter, Batya, happened to be near the river as Moshe was drifting by, so she stretched out her arm and took hold of the basket. When she saw there was a baby boy, she understood that he was there because of her father's evil decree and decided to raise him as her own.

When Moshe grew up, he ventured out of the palace and saw the pain and agony that the Jewish people were undergoing. Once, Moshe saw an Egyptian taskmaster hitting a Jew, and decided that he could no longer stand by as his brothers and sisters were suffering.

So, Moshe said G-d's holy and secret 72-letter name, instantly killing the Egyptian taskmaster. When Moshe's deed was told to Pharaoh, he fled to Midian to escape Pharaoh's wrath.

When Moshe settled in Midian, he married Tzipporah, the daughter of Yisro, and took the job of tending to his father-in-law's cattle. While following a lost sheep, he stumbled upon the burning bush one day.

As he came closer, a voice told him to take off his shoes, as he was standing on holy ground. G-d told Moshe to return to Egypt and lead the Jewish people to the promised land.

When Moshe returned to Egypt, he met up with his older brother, Aaron, and saw Pharaoh. When Pharaoh heard Moshe's demand, he replied by making the Jewish people work even harder than before. They would now need to collect their own straw to make bricks while also maintaining the same production minimum as before.

A question comes to mind: When Moshe and Aaron went before Pharaoh and told him their request, he replied to them, (5:4-5) *"Why are you disturbing the people from their work? Go to your own work. There are many people on land working, and you are stopping them from doing their labor"*. What is Pharaoh insinuating by differentiating Moshe and Aaron's work from the Jewish people's labor?

Rashi explains that, in fact, Moshe and Aaron's work was different than the Jewish people's labor. Pharaoh allowed the tribe of Levi to learn Torah instead of doing the back-breaking work like the rest of the nation. Since Moshe and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi, they were not forced to work.

When Pharaoh replied to them, *“to go back to their own work and stop disturbing the rest of the nation,”* he meant that they should go to learn Torah and let the rest of the Jewish people do as they were doing before.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that Pharaoh was asking Moshe and Aaron why they were complaining at all since they didn't have to work, only the other Jews. However, since Moshe was a true leader, he understood that even though he was not being hurt at this time, he could not stand idly by as long as even one Jew was in pain.

Moshe Rabbeinu demonstrated how to manifest the quintessential concept of *“Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh,”* that all Jews are responsible for each other (Shavuos 39a). If even one Jew isn't okay, the entire Jewish nation isn't okay.

This is why the Lubavitcher Rebbe sent emissaries to strengthen Judaism all over the globe; if even one Jew does not have a relationship with G-d, the ultimate redemption will not occur, C“V. Our souls intrinsically connected, which means that if even one of us lacks a connection to G-d, all of us lack a connection to G-d.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that the Jewish nation is inherently connected. Hence, the physical and spiritual future of the Jewish people lies in every Jewish person's hands.

Therefore, we must be kind and compassionate towards one another, even if the other person does not deserve such kindness. We can not stand still when we know a person requires assistance. When we offer our help, we must do so in a kind, compassionate, and discreet manner — for that will bring closer the ultimate redemption.

“Even the weak are strong when they are united.”

Have a wonderful Shabbos!
Rabbi Sholom Yemini