

# עטרת השבוע



## ATERES HASHAVUA

THE WEEKLY TORAH PUBLICATION FROM THE STUDENTS OF  
**MESIVTA ATERES YAAKOV**  
*The Ruth & Hyman Simon High School*

לז"נ  
 שרה שיינדל  
 בת אריה משה

פרשת שמות  
 י"ח טבת תשע"ד  
 DECEMBER 21, 2013

Candle Lighting: 4:12

First זמן קריאת שמע: 8:58

Second זמן ק"ש: 9:34

Sunrise: 7:15

Latest זמן תפלה: 10:20

שקיעה: 4:31

Earliest Havdalah: 5:21

(50 minutes)

All times are for Lawrence, NY only

### AN ODE TO A NAME

By Rabbi Akiva Tarkieltaub, Sho'el Umayshiv

“ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה...” (שמות א' א')

“And these are the names of the children of Yisrael who entered Mitzrayim...” (Shemos 1:1)

There are two names for the second of the חמישה חומשי תורה. In addition to the well-known name of *Shemos*, the *Ramban* tells us it is also called the ספר הגאולה. It would seem that there is a connection between "שמות", the name of a person, and גאולה, redemption from *galus*, exile. The truth is that *Chazal* tell us that one of the reasons that *klal yisrael* were זוכה to leave Mitzrayim was because they didn't change their names. Therefore we can see that there is a connection between the name of a person and the *geulah*. What is the significance of a Jewish name, and how did this help *klal yisrael* leave Mitzrayim?

This week's *parsha* starts off with “ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה”. The תורה tells us the names of the Jews who went to Mitzrayim. There are a few questions on this pasuk. First, *Rashi* asks, why was it necessary to count the בני ישראל, as they were already counted earlier in *Parshas Vayigash*? Another question is based on a rule in *Chazal* that whenever the Torah uses the word “ואלה” it is coming to add something onto what was previously mentioned. The letter וי is מוסיף על הראשונות, it adds to what has just been said. Where is there an addition in this pasuk, when the בני ישראל were already counted in ויגש? *Rashi* answers the first question by explaining that the Jews were recounted to show the love that Hashem has for *Klal Yisrael*. However, the second question remains: what is this pasuk being מחדש that wasn't mentioned previously?

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### BALANCING ACT

By Ezra Sturm, 11th Grade

“ויצו פרעה לכל עמו לאמר כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכהו וכל הבת תחיון” (א:בב)

“And Pharaoh commanded his entire people, saying, ‘Every son that will be born, into the river shall you throw him and every daughter shall you keep alive’” (Shemos 1:22)

*Rashi* explains on this *pasuk*, that when Pharaoh said “every son,” he didn't only mean that the Jewish sons needed to be killed, but that all newborn boys in Egypt had to be killed. The *gemara* in *Chagiga* (15a) explains the *pasuk* as, “G-d has made one opposite the other” (*Koheles* 7:14), as follows: “Everything that G-d created in His world, He created an opposite to it. He created the righteous; He created the wicked. He created *Gan Eden*; He created *Gehinnom*.” Everything that's *ruchniyus* has a similar and opposing counterpart to it. When Moshe entered the world with an exceptionally holy *neshama*, an equally opposing evil soul simultaneously came into existence. When Pharaoh heard the news from his astrologers that the leader of the Jewish people was about to be born, and that the downfall of his people would come through water, he immediately demanded that all newborn Jewish boys be killed by throwing them into the Nile River. When Pharaoh decided to rid the world of the holy soul that was embodied by Moshe

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Rabbi Tarkieltaub (continued from page 1)

The רבינו אפרים says that the *gemmatria* of מצרימה is שממה.

What is שמות רבינו אפרים teaching us with this גמטריה? In ספר תהילים we learn an interesting connection between the word שמות (*shemos*), names and שממה, desolate. The *gemara* in *Brachos* on דף ז' discusses the meanings of a name. The *gemara* quotes a *pasuk* in תהילים in which דוד המלך says, "לכו חזו מפעלות ה' אשר שם שמות בארץ", go and see the works of Hashem who has placed "שממה" in the lands. The *gemara* tells us to change the word שמות (desolation) and substitute the word שמות, names. Instead of translating the *pasuk* as saying that Hashem placed desolation in the land, the *pasuk* is saying Hashem placed names in the land. What does it mean that Hashem placed names in the land, and what is the connection between names and desolation?

The *Maharal* in דרך חיים says that there is a difference when a name is given in לשון הקדש compared to when it is given in another language (and this is the case whether it is a name of a person, place or object). In other languages, a name is just a basic word to reference the person, place or object. In לשון הקדש however, a name is a description of the person, place or object's essence and purpose. The ספרים takes this a step further and explain that not only does a name explain the essence of a person as a whole, but it can also help a person understand his תכלית in each situation he finds himself. An example of this יסוד can be found in this week's *parsha*. The ספורט explains that Moshe Rabbeinu was named Moshe because his purpose was to elevate and pull the *Yidden* who were sinking up from the depths of *tummah*.

The *gemara* in *Brachos* that explains the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* is teaching us that when there is a land which is desolate, we should not focus on the שמות, desolation, but rather on the שמות, the name, which help us understand our purpose. When רבינו אפרים states that the *gemmatria* of מצרימה is שממה, he is teaching us that מצרים (and in truth all גלויות) represents a state of desolation. When a person or a place is desolate it means that it has no purpose. When we are in *galus* we live without understanding what our purpose is. When the Torah says, "ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה" it is teaching us that as *Klal Yisrael* are entering the land of Mitzraim, where they will be in a land of "שממה" without a purpose, it is important to stress their names, which teaches a person his essence. There is a מדרש in this week's *parsha* which interprets the meanings of the names of the שבטים differently from the interpretation found in ספר בראשית. The ספר בראשית explains that the interpretation found in ספר בראשית describes the essence and purpose of the שבטים when they lived in כנען. The מדרש explains their names according to the תכלית of the שבטים when they lived in מצרים. The תורה is not just repeating the names of the שבטים, but rather is adding the meaning and תכלית of the שבטים while they lived in Mitzrayim.

One of the ways *Kal Yisrael* was זוכה to the גאולה was שלא שינו את שמם. They understood that the importance of a Jewish name is how it helps a person understand his תכלית in any situation. In fact, this חומש is called שמות and ספר הגאולה because the secret to achieving גאולה lies in the name of a person. May we be מחזק ourselves in understanding the importance of a Jewish name. Good Shabbos.

Ezra Sturm (continued from page 1)

Rabbeinu, the opposite power of evil also had to be eliminated. That is why Pharaoh declared that all newborn boys had to be killed on the day Moshe was born.

The above idea of counter balance between good and evil describes another incident in the Torah. Rav Yosef Chaim shows this concept toward the end of the *sefer* of *Bamidbar* (31:2), where Hashem told Moshe, "Take vengeance for the children of Israel against the Midianites; afterwards you will be gathered unto your people." As *Rashi* says, it seems that Moshe's death depends on *Bnei Yisrael* waging a war against Midyan. Why would these two events be connected?

Moshe was the greatest *Navi* who ever walked on the face of the Earth. The evil opposing force was the *Navi* Bilaam. Bilaam was the complete antithesis of Moshe's holiness. If Moshe was about to die, Bilaam also had to die. Because Bilaam was killed in the war against Midyan, *Bnei Yisrael* were commanded to fight this war before Moshe died.

The perfect balance that characterizes this world leaves the individual with the choice to side with either side of each force. It is the challenge of man to choose to always side with the force of *kedusha* in order to counteract the powerful forces of *tummah* that fill this world.

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## STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

*Chezky Friedman, 12th Grade*

One time the Baal Shem Tov prayed the silent *amidah* for an inordinately long time. Several of the *talmidim* grew impatient and left, and the Baal Shem Tov abruptly concluded his prayer. He then gently reprimanded them, "If one wishes to reach a very high place, one may have to stand on the shoulders of someone who, in turn, is standing on another person's shoulders. If either of the bottom persons leave, the top person falls. "As long as you were all with me, I could stand on your shoulders and reach the highest celestial spheres. But however when you all left I had no where to go but down."

R' Zusia of Tolumutch once said to his brother, R' Elimelech, "Melech, I am tormented by a problem. The Talmud says that the souls of all humans until the end of time were contained in the soul of Adam. Then you and I were there, too. How did we allow Adam to transgress the divine command and eat of the forbidden fruit?" R' Elimelech responded, "I did want to resist, but I realized that the serpent had told Adam and Eve that Hashem forbade the fruit of the tree of knowledge because, if they ate from its fruit, they would be as wise as Hashem. If Adam had not eaten of it, he might have thought for the rest of his life, "If only I had eaten the fruit, I would have been as wise as Hashem. I, therefore, I decided that it would be far better let him transgress than to live entire life with the heretical thought that a human being can be as wise as Hashem." R' Zusia responded, "You have given me peace of mind. A person must realize that even with the maximum wisdom attainable, one is nothing before the infinite."

The *Maggid* of Mezeritch, R' Nochum, was an *ilui* (child prodigy in Torah), and at a young age studied Kabbalah. He was orphaned as a child and was raised by his aunt, who showed preference to her own children, giving Nochum the smallest portion of food. One time his aunt left the house after preparing the meal. Nochum was hungry, so he took the smallest portion, which he knew would be his. When the aunt returned, she beat him. When Nochum said to her that he had taken the smallest portion, the aunt said "True, you did not take more than your share. Nevertheless, you should never take even what is yours without asking permission." Many years later, R' Nochum said, "I never forgot that. Even if one is certain he is right, one must always ask."

R' Mordechai, often referred to as "the Czernoble Maggid," had eight sons, all of whom became Chassidic masters and established dynasties. His eldest son and successor was R' Aaron. R' Yaakov Yisroel of Cherkassy, whom we refer to as "the Cherkassy Zeide," was the third of the eight sons. R' Mordechai once said, "My sons are like the seven candles of the Menorah." Someone remarked, "But you have eight sons." R' Mordechai responded, "Do you think that a father is unaware of how many children he has? The Torah says that the High Priest, Aaron, kindled the seven lights of the Menorah. My son Aaron, does the same."

## B'DCHILU U'RHIMU ~ WITH LOVE AND WITH AWE

*Naftali Engel, 12th Grade*

"ותדר בת פרעה לרחץ על היאר ונערתיה הלכת על יד היאר ותרא את התבה בתוך הסוף ותשלח את אמתה ותקחה" (שמות ב' ה')

"And Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe in the Nile, and her maidens were walking alongside the Nile, she saw a basket amongst the reeds, she sent her maidservant, and she took it." (Shemos 2:5)

The Hebrew word *ammashah* "her maidservant" can also be translated as "her arm." So now translated, the *pasuk* would read: "Pharaoh's daughter... saw a basket amongst the reeds, she put out her arm, and she took it." This says the Talmud, is to teach us that her arm extended many arms-lengths so she could reach the basket.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk says: If the basket did lay "many arms-lengths" beyond her reach, why did Pharaoh's daughter even try to extend her arm in the first place seeing it was "many arms-lengths" away?

There is a profound lesson here for each and every one of us: This teaches us that even when we are confronted with a situation that is beyond our capacity to fix, we should not resign ourselves, reasoning that the little we can do – the little we can reach – won't change anything anyway. Pharaoh's daughter heard a child's cry and extended her arm despite the fact that a seemingly unbridgeable distance lay between her and the basket. But because she did the maximum of which she was capable, G-d did the rest.

אחד מי יודע אחד אני יודע. In this poem we ascend from one to thirteen and list the attributes that connect us with each particular number. With each verse we always return to one- אחד אלקינו בשמים ובארץ as each successive attribute is ultimately reflective of the singular, unique Oneness of Hashem (Incidentally, it is important to note that the final number in this poem is thirteen-the *gematria* of אחד)

Now, with most of the list it is easy to understand why we can say אני יודע that we know the significance of these numbers whereas others don't. *Luchos, Avos, Imahos, Mikra* and so on are exclusively part of our heritage. However, when we get to seven, although *Shabbos* is certainly ours, can we truly claim; שבעה אני יודע that we know seven? Don't other cultures and nations also have a seven day week? Can't they also know seven? Well actually, no. Ancient calendar systems were based on readily observable natural phenomena. These accounted for days, months and years. The concept of a week was unknown. Weeks were introduced to the world by the Torah, rooted of course in מעשה בראשית.

This brings us to our discussion about *Lechem Mishneh*. We use two *Challos* on *Shabbos* as a זכר למן; a remembrance of the original *Lechem Mishneh*- the double portion of מן that fell on *erev Shabbos* for the *Yidden* in the *midbar*. The *Malbim* explains that it was *Shabbos* that prepared sustenance for the entire week, which is why we find the name מן being given in connection with *Shabbos*: Behold, Hashem has given you the *Shabbos*, therefore on the sixth day He has given you two days bread. This is followed by ויקראו בית ישראל את שמו מן a name, says the *Malbim*, that refers to the אמונה that it is the *Shabbos* that provides מזון for the week.

We, and only we, know seven because for us there is a readily observable natural phenomenon- the double portion of מן which indicates that the seventh day is *Shabbos*. And as the *Malbim* explains, the *Lechem Mishneh* phenomenon of the מן was not limited to the generation in the *midbar*, rather it is a reality for all generations. So when we set our tables with the *Lechem Mishnah*, covered above and below as was the מן it is not just a remembrance of the past, but a reminder that it is the *Shabbos* which provides for us throughout the week. And, yes, the blessings and bounty of *Shabbos* are a phenomenon for all generations.

What was Adam Harishon, the author of שיר ליום השבת, singing about? In discussion of the restorative powers of *Shabbos*, the *medrash* relates how, when Adam recognized the value and power of *Teshuva*, he composed this hymn. Another explanation in the *medrash* is that the שיר ליום השבת is a celebration of *Shabbos* being a day of respite from forces of war and destruction, and a day of dwelling in peace with Hashem.

The central force which connects *Shabbos* with Torah, *Teshuva*, Hashem and creation is peace. We discussed how acting peaceably and harmoniously with each other is requisite to our receiving the shelter of peace-the *Sukkas Shalom*-with which Hashem lovingly embraces us on *Shabbos*. According to this, these two explanations in the *medrash* share a common theme.

Let us examine yet another explanation of the *medrash*. The song of *Shabbos* is double- מזמור שיר. The *korbon* of *Shabbos* is double- שני כבשים. The warnings of *Shabbos* are double- זכור ושמור. Its punishments are double, and its rewards are double. And of course, as its לחם is double.

We cover the *Lechem Mishneh* above and below, reminiscent of the מן. There is another, better known, reason for covering the *Lechem Mishneh*, and that is so as not to embarrass the bread when we bypass it to make *Kiddush* on wine.

Now, how embarrassed can a piece of bread get? There is a story told of a husband, who upon arriving home one Friday night with his *Shabbos* guests noticed that the *challos* were uncovered. With exasperation, he berated his wife for neglecting to cover the challah, embarrassing her in front of the guests. Witnessing this shameful display of uncouth unctuousness, one of the guests asked him, "so remind me again, why is it that we cover the *challos*?"

We hope the story ended on a positive note and they lived happily ever after, but the point is that the lesson of being concerned for inanimate objects is to sensitize us to being mindful of each other. This third explanation of the *medrash*, then, shares the common theme of peace with the first two *p'shatim*.

How fitting it is that at our *Shabbos seuda*, when we will be greeting the *malachei hashalom* to join us for the day whose theme is *Shalom* that we learn this subtle, yet powerful lesson of the importance of peace-even the peace of bread.



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