



Ohr Yerushalayim News

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to Ben Mr & Mrs David Jacobs on the birth of a baby girl.

Mazel Tov to the Rov & Rebbetzin on Bar Mitzva of their grandson Moshe Modcha in Gateshead this Shabbos.

Ladies Shiur

A reminder that the next installment of the Rov's shiur for ladies on תפילה ענייני תפילה takes place on Tuesday at 8.15pm at 48 Waterpark Road. Please bring with either a שמואל א' or a ראש השנה Machzor.

New Shiur Starting This Week

A four week series of shiurim given by Rabbi Lewis starts this Thursday at 8.00pm in the Shul, on the dinim of סדרת המשפחה and יחוד. This shiur is for men only.

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Tough Love

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Moshe, the humblest man who was ever on the face of this earth, the man who consistently pleaded with Hashem to spare the Jewish nation from his wrath, emerges this week for the very first time.

First impressions are almost always last impressions, so I wondered what are Moshe's first actions? Surely they would typify his future distinction.

Open a Chumash and explore the young lad who is found on the Nile, spends his youth in Pharaoh's palace, and finally "goes out amongst his brothers." He sees an Egyptian smiting a Jew and then, in a non-speaking role (at least without speaking to any human), he kills him. That is Moshe's foray in communal activism.

His first words seem diametrically opposed to his ensuing persona. The next day, Moshe "went out and behold, two Hebrew men were fighting." He immediately chastised the wicked one, "Why would you strike your fellow?" (Exodus 2:13). His admonition provokes an angry response from the quarrelers. "Who appointed you as a dignitary, a ruler, and a judge over us? Do you propose to murder me, as you murdered the Egyptian?" (Ibid. v. 4). Moshe's hallmark compassion and concern seems to be overshadowed by his forceful admonition. Is that the first impression the Torah wants us to have of Moshe?

In his youth, Reb Zorach Braverman, who later was known as a brilliant Jerusalem scholar, once travelled from Eishishok to Vilna, Lithuania. Sitting next to him was an elderly Jew with whom he began to converse. Reb Zorach commented to the old man that it was sad that in a city as large as Vilna there was no organized Torah youth group.

The old man became agitated. In a tear-stained voice he responded, "Whom do you expect to organize these groups, "he asked incredulously, " the communal leaders who are destroying Judaism in Vilna? They do nothing to promote Torah values!"

The man went on to condemn a group of pamasim who had assumed control of the community affairs and constantly overruled the

Rabbinical authorities in every aspect of communal life as it related to observance of Jewish law. Reb Zorach became incensed. Who was this man to deride a group of community elders? He responded vociferously. "Excuse me," he interrupted, " but I think you should study the new sefer (book) that was just published. It is called Chofetz Chaim and deals specifically with the laws of slander and gossip. It details all the transgressions listed in the Torah for gossip as such! In fact, I have it here with me."

The old man asked to see the book. He took it and immediately opened it to a section which specified the rare instance it was a mitzvah to speak out against a group of people, in the case when they act defiantly against rabbinic authority.

Reb Zorach remained quiet and silently took back the book. The trip ended and the old man and Reb Zorach went their ways in Vilna. It only took a day until Reb Zorach found out that he was seated next to none other than the Chofetz Chaim himself.

Of course, Moshe was the compassionate advocate for Klal Yisrael. But the Torah chooses to define his leadership in a clear and unambiguous manner in strong and controversial encounters. His first act was to kill an Egyptian who was smiting a Jew, and his second was to chastise two Jews who were fighting so strongly that they threatened to report his former act to the Egyptian authorities. After the Torah establishes an ability to reprove and even rebuke sin, only then does it tell us of Moshe's compassion in protecting the daughters of Yisro, in tending sheep by running after a tiny lamb who lost its way in the scorching dessert.

Often I hear quotes, "if Rav Moshe were alive today," or "if the Chofetz Chaim were alive today," followed by a notion that these beloved, departed, sages, with their celebrated love and

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת שמות

Candle Lighting	No later than 4.07pm
Mincha	4.12pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.16am
Mincha 1 st / 2 nd Minyan	1.30pm / 4.15pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	4.45pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.20pm
Ovos Uvonim	6.20pm
Sunday 1 st / 2 nd Minyan	7.20am / 8.20am
Sunday Mincha & Maariv	4.15pm
Monday/Thursday	7.10am
Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday	7.20am
Maariv Monday - Thursday	7.45pm
Shabbos Next Week	4.20pm

compassion for all Jews, would surely ascribe to unmitigated love and acceptance of anyone's notion of Judaism as an acceptable alternative.

It's just not true. Great leaders and Torah visionaries do have tremendous love for all Jews, but they do not compromise on Torah law or on Torah values. They are vociferous advocates of right versus wrong. Though one minute they may be chasing lost sheep, running after a small child who dropped a small coin, or translating a letter for an indigent immigrant, they would not hesitate to strike the Egyptian and chastise their fellow Jew who raised his hand against another, physically or spiritually. What truly makes a great man is not only knowing how and when to hold them, but also knowing how and when to scold them.

To be Caring ... To be Daring

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And it happened in those days that Moshe grew up and he went out to his brothers and saw their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man, of his brothers. He turned this way and that way and saw that there was no man, so he struck down the Egyptian man and hid him in the sand. (Shemos 2:11-12)

And he saw their burdens: He placed his eyes and his heart to be pained about them. (Rashi)

These are the first recorded steps of the mature man Moshe onto the stage of history. What did he do that was so great? He left the comfortable confines of the palace of Pharaoh. What's so special about that? Why was it such a defining moment in the life of Moshe? Certainly he already knew of the suffering work of the Jews in Egypt? What was gained by going out to visit the painful scenes first hand? What did he see that he had not already heard about? That's exactly the point!

Our Baale' Musar understood well what Madison Avenue, the motor vehicle bureau, and propagandists of all stripes and allegiances have understood, "We do not act on what we hear but rather on what we see." For that reason chronic traffic violators are forced to witness scenes of terrible crashes till it is etched into their psyches what the mind already knows, "55 saves lives". Maybe it was twenty years ago there was a tidal wave in Bangladesh and 100,000 people lost their lives within a few moments. I went home that night and at dinner discussed the extent of the human tragedy. I was able to eat with gusto. That same year I hit a little dog coming home one night. I had no desire for dinner that night. What happened? Isn't large scale human suffering more sacred to me than a single doggy? The answer is, "This one I only heard about and this one I saw!"

While in Israel I had occasion to spend some time with an old friend who at an earlier time in his life had been a Protestant minister. Since then he has made some great changes. When he tells his story he begins in Hamburg Germany where he and his wife had been studying for their doctorate in Protestant theology. One Sunday morning he stumbled upon an entire picturesque segment of the Hamburg newspaper that was dedicated to 50th anniversary of Kristalnacht. My friend describes his horror as he studied the vivid image of gruesome beatings of Jews on the cobble stone streets on a familiar café corner adjacent to the university where he and his colleagues had had many a discussion about love and other lofty subjects. He was curious why he had never heard any mention about these local events before. Certainly if these atrocities happened within the shadows of the university campus there must have been some official protest. His inquiries were blithely dismissed. There were no official or unofficial responses. These were only Jews being abused. What then, he wondered, the value of all this talk of love?

He began a feverish campaign to discover why the Jewish People were the ones continuously treated to the persecution. Finding no meaningful answers within his circle of professors and priests he found his way to the Jewish community and what he discovered was not in the least bit hateful, if anything it was loving and truthful and maybe that

was the real rub. As a result of this search he his wife began a new path as dedicated Torah Jews.

Certainly, Asher, as he is now known, had heard of Kristalnacht. He had to visually experience the devastation to act on the message. So too Moshe went out to witness the pain of his people to be caring...to be daring.

Small Miracles

Rabbi Yaakov Menken (Torah.org)

"And a man from the house of Levi went out, and took for his wife a daughter of Levi." [Shemos 2:1]

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi) explains the extra word "vayelech [went out]" in this verse, which refers to Amram and Yocheved. Amram had previously married Yocheved, he explains, but separated from her in response to Pharaoh's decree that all Jewish boys be killed. Amram "went out" in the path of his daughter's advice.

According to our Sages, his daughter Miriam told him, "Your decree is still worse than Pharaoh's! Pharaoh decreed only against Jewish boys, but yours is against girls as well!" Because of Miriam's counsel, Amram remarried Yocheved, and Our Rabbi Moshe was born.

We should wonder, though, when Miriam made her argument, and when it was accepted. Obviously the separation went on for some time, especially because Pharaoh made two decrees. The first decree was that the midwives should kill any male Jewish child [1:16]. After that failed, Pharaoh then told his entire nation to throw any Jewish boy into the Nile river [1:22]. Amram, apparently, remarried only after the second decree, which ordered all Egyptians to take part! Does this make sense?

In order to answer this, let us look first at another puzzling story. In Parshas Vayeshev, which we read several weeks ago, Yosef's brothers decide to kill him. But "Reuven heard, and he saved him from their hands..." [Br. 37:21]. What did they do instead? They threw him in a pit, "and the pit was empty, it had no water" [37:24]. Our Sages asked, "if it says the pit is empty, don't I know that it has no water? Rather, it had no water, but it did have snakes and scorpions" [Talmud Shabbos 22a]. So what kind of "rescue" did Reuven carry out? How can the Torah credit Reuven with "saving" Yosef, when he dumped Yosef into a pit filled with snakes and scorpions?

The answer goes to the very nature of a human being. A human being has one trait which, above all others, distinguishes us from animals: the trait of free will, of choice. Humans can choose to kill or not to kill; for animals, the decision is made by a host of external factors - animals don't go on a rampage because they "feel like doing it," nor are they generous by choice. Only we humans have the ability to make our own decisions.

Because the natural order of things is for humans to have free will, it would have been miraculous beyond nature for Divine Intervention to save Yosef from his stronger brothers who had surrounded him. Because scorpions, on the other hand, do not have free choice, it is not entirely unnatural (though certainly unusual) for them to fail to sting and kill someone who lands in their pit. Therefore Reuven did indeed save Yosef. He saved Yosef from his brothers, given that Divine Intervention could then save him from the snakes and scorpions in the pit - a miracle, but not beyond nature.

We can then understand why Amram might more willingly remarry Yocheved after the second decree. Under the first, the midwives were commanded to kill the boys, and had they not displayed amazing self-sacrifice, an open miracle would have been needed to save each child. The second decree, however, put death in the hands of the river - and thus only a "natural" miracle would be needed to save them.