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Parshas Shemos : Approaching Geula / Redemption

"And these are the names of the children of Israel who are coming to Egypt..."

Here the Torah begins the Book of Redemption, as the Ramban calls Sefer Shemos. Yet there are a few difficulties with this posuk, as the commentaries point out. Firstly, why begin an entirely new chapter of the Chumash with the word "And"? Secondly, why begin this new book with information that we already know? After all, not only do we already know the names of all of Yaakov's children, but these verses are almost entirely repetitious of verses in Bereishis which describe Yaakov's journey from Canaan to Egypt. Why the seemingly useless repetition, especially according to the premise that every word of the Torah is precious and therefore intended by HaShem to

teach us an important lesson for how to lead our lives? So, what lesson can we learn from a repetition of the names of Yaakov's sons? And why specifically should that lesson be positioned at the very beginning of Sefer Shemos?

One last problem with this posuk is why does it begin by describing Yaakov and his children as "coming" (present tense) to Egypt, rather than saying, "...that came..." (past tense, as it says at the end of the posuk).

Let's begin our contemplation by recalling the famous rule HaShem utilizes in running the universe: "G-d always precedes the antidote to the sickness."

Practically speaking, this means that for any problem we may encounter in this world, a solution already exists. Why? Because G-d is a compassionate and loving Creator Who presents us with difficulties in order to develop our abilities and character traits. Problems are opportunities for us to dig deep within ourselves and find solutions. Just like our math teacher who made our lives difficult with seemingly impossible problems to solve. At that time we were sure

they hated us and were trying to torture us, but later on we realized that they were really using 'tough love' and were trying to push us to develop our minds to our utmost.

So, too, HaShem is constantly presenting us with challenges and difficulties in order to push us to perfect ourselves. Sometimes we must strive intellectually to find an adequate solution to our problem. Sometimes we must perfect our humility and forbearance in order to accept the situation HaShem has decreed upon us. And sometimes we must find the sins for which we are being punished (measure for measure) and strive to repent for them.

Since HaShem wants us to overcome all of the challenges He puts in front of us, therefore He 'arms' us before each one with the implements and wherewithal to perform those tasks and reach our perfection. Hence, the "Refuah / antidote before the Makka / sickness." So, too, with each of our exiles, and especially our exile in Egypt. Before we even arrived, HaShem had laid the 'medicinal' groundwork for the exile which would allow the Jews to flourish and perfect themselves for the ultimate redemption. The following are some examples of this 'medicine' which HaShem preceded to the sickness:

Yosef was sent to Egypt, not only to set up the sustenance which the Jews would need, and the land of Goshen which the Jews would need as a separate dwelling place, but also to create a spiritual rampart and protection for the Jews in Egypt. The whole story of Yosef and the bothersome wife of Potifar wasn't merely Divine providence for landing Yosef in Pharaoh's prison, which positioned Yosef for being introduced to Pharaoh. The conflict with the wife of Potifar was part of HaShem's way of preparing the setting of Galus Mitsrayim / Egyptian exile. You see, Egypt was known as the most promiscuous of lands in those days, so how were the Jews supposed to survive 200 years of exile in the most promiscuous nation and not succumb? And, by the way, they did not succumb. The Torah later hints to only one single time that an Egyptian man had relations with a Jewish woman! How is that possible? Because Yosef already received a "vaccination" against Egyptian morality on behalf of the entire Jewish Nation when he vehemently resisted the incessant advances of Potifar's wife. He even ran outside when she grabbed his garment, resulting in a long-term prison sentence!

Another preparation for Egyptian exile was when Yaakov sent Yehuda on ahead of the rest of the nation in order to set up a Yeshiva for Torah learning. Since learning Torah is like breathing oxygen for the Jewish Nation, it was essential that there be a proper continuity without interruption, therefore Yehuda was sent ahead. Our Sages tell us that there was a similar preparation for Galus Bavel when HaShem caused the Torah leaders to be exiled first, allowing them to create a Torah learning infrastructure before the bulk of the nation arrived for the 70 years exile. And Rav Meir Shapiro said his mother had orchestrated something similar when he was a boy and they moved to another city. In fact, that was what inspired him to create the Daf Yomi network of learning in each city, so that a Jew could always continue his Torah learning uninterrupted when he found himself in a new town.

Here we can begin to understand why the Book of Redemption begins with a recounting of the names of all our great ancestors, even though we already know them. This was an important part of the antidote before the sickness. Continuity and tradition! Keeping constantly in touch with our great roots and repeating them over and over in our minds. Knowing that our connection to our illustrious past is our true greatness and it's who we really are. Therefore our stay there will be like a big "And" constantly connecting to our past. This prevents assimilation and also insures that we stay true to our real values and strive to achieve the greatness of our ancestors. This also explains why the sons of Yaakov are described as "coming" to Egypt, because every moment they are coming into the minds of the Jewish Nation and inspiring them to remain great Jews like their ancestors!

And this fresh connection to our great ancestors is what insured the true redemption, because returning to the greatness of our forefathers is the redemption. So says the Ramban in his introduction to this Book of Redemption. In fact, with that he explains why the Book of Redemption doesn't merely end with the recounting of the achieving freedom. Rather, it ends after the building of the Mishkan / Tabernacle. Why? Because that is when HaShem's Divine Presence dwelt permanently in our midst, returning us to the glory of our forefathers who lived with the Divine Presence in their midst! That's true Redemption, says the Ramban!!! May we nurture all the ingredients needed for our redemption, mirroring the redemption of our forefathers and returning us to our ancient glory!!

A Guten Shabbos!

	Rabbi Alexander London Gemara Sunday – Thursday
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BAVA KAMMA 48a

RIGHTS OF USAGE

The Gemara poses a question: When a person allows an item to be placed in his courtyard, and thus takes

responsibility for it; does the person take responsibility only for damage that he causes to the item, or does he also take responsibility for damage caused by intruders?

The Gemara attempts to bring a proof from a Beraisa that Rav Yehuda Bar Simon taught in the academy of Karna. The Beraisa states: If one brings his produce into a courtyard without permission, and an ox came from somewhere else and ate it; he is exempt. If the produce was brought in with permission, he is liable. The Gemara attempts to clarify: Who is exempt and who is liable? Is it not that the owner of the courtyard is exempt when the

produce is brought in without permission, and the owner of the courtyard is liable when the produce is brought in with permission. Thus we see that when a person allows an item to be placed in his courtyard, he takes responsibility for damage caused by intruders!

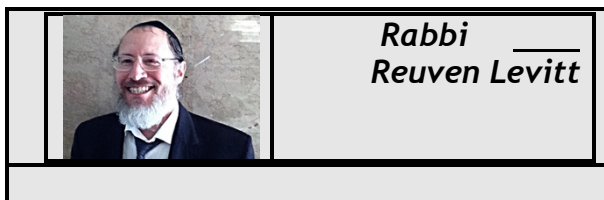
The Gemara rejects the proof: No, the owner of the ox is exempt when the produce was brought in without permission, and the owner of the ox is liable when the produce was brought in with permission. An objection is raised: If the Beraisa is referring to the owner of the ox, what difference is there whether the produce was brought in with or without permission?

The Gemara answers: Once is the owner of the produce is granted permission to bring in his produce, the courtyard becomes his domain. Thus, this is a case of shen (damage through eating) in the damaged party's private domain. The owner of an animal is liable for shen in a private domain. When the produce was brought in without permission, it similar to a case of shen in a public domain, since the courtyard is not the domain of the damaged party. The owner of an animal is exempt for shen in a public domain.

In order to acquire a courtyard, one must either give money, receive a deed of ownership, or make a chazaka (such as building a fence). In our case, none of the above was done. How then does the courtyard become the private domain of the owner of the produce?

The Nesivos Hamishpat (192:6) bring from the Magid Mishneh (Scheinim 8:7) that right to use someone else's is equivalent to a lien on that property. It is not legal ownership of the property. Thus, the right to use property is not acquired in the same manner as property itself (with money, etc.). Rather, that right is acquired with the initial use of the property.

Thus, in our case, the owner of the produce acquired the right of usage of the courtyard when he brought in the produce (with permission). Since he has the right of usage of the courtyard, that courtyard is considered his private domain. Therefore the owner of the intruding ox must pay for the produce that his animal ate.



**Rabbi
Reuven Levitt**

Rabbi Reuven Levitt
Sunday – Thursday, 10:20 –11:15 a.m.

Who Is The Majority?

We may be wondering deep inside our hearts, “yes I know that Hashem is the Creator of the entire world and yes, He commanded 613 mitzvos at Har Sini, but how could it be, that so many people, in fact the overwhelming majority of the world's population, do not believe this at all?”

The author of the Sefer Tumim was asked by a non-Jewish philosopher the following question: The Torah

says, “You shall decide questions of law according to the majority,” (Shmos 23:2) since the Jews are such a small minority in the world, shouldn't you accept the truth from the majority in matters of faith?

The Rav answered, “this case refers to cases of doubt .For example, let's say that in a certain neighborhood, there are nine stores which sell kosher meat and one store which does not. You find a piece of meat without any label on it. You are allowed to assume that it comes from a kosher store since the majority of stores sell kosher meat. If, however, you find a package of meat which is labeled “O' Reilly's X-mas Meats” you have no doubt that this is from the one non kosher store.”

“So too with us,” continued the Rav. “We have no doubts about the truth of our faith.” (Chasam Sofer, Toras Moshe)

According to Rav Elchonon Wasserman, this non Jewish philosopher's question is not a question at all. The verse quoted above refers to a majority of qualified judges who have no vested interest causing them to be biased and therefore unfit to judge the case. The non Jewish philosophers do not fall under this category. They, like their predecessor Aristotle, are highly biased towards their world view. The over one and a half million prophets of Klal Yisroel, plus all of our Sages, are all holy and pure, not pulled the physical and material desires, are the majority of qualified and unbiased judges.

This is the meaning of Chazal “There is no one who is free except for a person who is engaged in Torah” (Avos 6:2) Without Torah a person cannot free himself of the yetzer hara who is constantly rationalizing giving into his desires. Only Torah helps a person to overcome his desires and realize what Hashem wants him to do.

Hashem! Help us to clean ourselves of our Yetzer hara's desires .Help us to see clearly what it is that You want us to do! AMEN!

“Parasha Puzzler”

****~Rabbi Binyamin Moore~****

“Parasha Puzzler” –

Here is our question for Parashas Shemos:

In this week's parashah (ch. 2), the Torah describes the birth of our great leader, Moshe. The chapter begins: וַיִּקַּח אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֵוִי אִשָּׁה בַת לֵוִי “A man from the house of Levi went and married the daughter of Levi.” This man was Amram and his wife was Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, as stated below (6:20), and she bore him three children, Miryam, Aharon and Moshe.

Our question is: Did Yocheved have any other children?

Answer on page 5

... **Rabbi Shlomo Furst**
Halachah

Sunday – Thursday, 9:35 - 10:20 a.m.

The thoughts and concentration required for Shemoneh Esrei are detailed and profound. For example, the Mechaber in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, in the first seif of simon 98, specifies four important requirements to fulfill while in the midst of Shemoneh Esrei: 1) to concentrate of the meaning of the words that are being said, 2) to regard it as if the Shechina is present, 3) to remove all distracting thoughts until the mind is clear and focused, 4) to regard it much more seriously than addressing a king of flesh and blood.

Therefore, with good reason, the Mechaber complements the halachos found in simon 98 with simon 104 — halachos concerning the prohibition of interrupting the prayer of Shemoneh Esrei. The Mechaber writes, “Do not interrupt while in prayer; even if a Jewish king asks about your welfare do not answer him...”

The Mishna Berura, in the first seif katan elaborates upon what constitutes an interruption, “and even to motion slightly is forbidden — unless for [pacifying] a crying child [then] it is permissible motion with the hands in order that [the child] be silent and his prayer with not be disturbed. And if this does not help [to sooth the child] move away from him — and do not speak with him [to pacify him].”

The act of moving away from the child to avoid the distracting noises and behavior is permitted. This is as indicated by the Mishna Berura in seif katan four, “that it seems as if walking [out of one’s position of Shemoneh Esrei if] for the needs of prayer — this is not an interruption” thus, if the child will not be calmed, one can leave the child and seeks a quieter, more favorable environment for prayer.

It is difficult to apply this halacha to a congregational setting. Obviously, the Chofetz Chaim, ztz”l, is not advocating or advising that an agitated and upset child who cannot be soothed — shall be left alone, leaving the congregation at the mercy of the unsupervised, irate youngster. Clear, a parent — a congregational setting — cannot leave a child under such circumstances, for the benefit of his own prayers. Obviously, what the Chofetz Chaim is describing, is situation a when the parent and child are in a private setting.

Moreover, the Chofetz Chaim openly writes and criticizes those who bring young child to the beis kenesses during the prayers. In simon 98, in seif katan two, the Mishna Berura writes, “The Shelah complains against those who bring children into the beis kenesses — that is, those children who have not yet reached the age of training [chinuch]. The reason being, is that such children play and frolic in the beis kenesses and profane the holiness of the beis kenesses — and also, they disturb the concentration of those who are praying. Moreover, also, when they grow up, they will not change their negative habits that their acquired in their youth which is to be wild and profane the holiness of the beis kenesses.”

On the contrary, there is much more to be gained by waiting until children are ready to understand

properly and respect the holiness of the beis kenesses. For, as the Mishna Berura concludes, “However, when they reach the age of chinuch, just the opposite, bring them to the beis kenesses and teach the way of life that they shall sit with awe and respect. And do not allow them to move from their place and encourage them to answer ‘amen,’ ‘kadish’ and ‘kedusha’... and look in Tanna d’Vei Eliyahu[1:13] regarding the great punishment that there is for a father that allows his son to do thoughtless and frivolous things in the beis kenesses.”

Rabbi Shlomo Furst

AVOS

The Gemara in Baba Kama (30a) teaching us that the learning of Pirkei Avos is part of the three faceted strategy that enables a person to become a chassid — someone who is sincerely devoted to Hashem. Rabbi Yehuda says that learning Nezikin is instrumental to becoming a chassid. Rava says that one should learn Pirkei Avos; and others add that learning Brachos is also required to perfect sincere devotion.

The Maharsha, in his commentary on this Gemara describes the chassid spoken about in the Gemara as a person whose “actions are done exceptionally better.” This is in contrast to a tzaddick, whose behavior conforms to the Shulchan Aruch, but no more. A chassid is superior in that his behavior is motivated by the desire to go beyond the letter of the law, and thereby serving Hashem in exceptionally special ways.

The Maharsha continues, explaining that the importance of true chassidus is evident from the Gemara in Avoda Zara (20b) — the Baraisa of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair that teaches “Torah leads to watchfulness, watchfulness leads to alacrity, alacrity leads to cleanliness, cleanliness leads to separation, separation leads to purity, purity leads to piousness, piousness leads to humility, humility leads to fear of sin, fear of sin leads to holiness, holiness leads to Ruach HaKadosh, Ruach HaKadosh leads to the techiyas hamayssim.” The Maharsha points out that the last achievement before Ruach HaKadosh is chassidus — an extra special, entirely sincere way of serving Hashem.

The Maharsha writes further, “Since there are three components to a person’s good deeds; specifically [those deeds that are] favorable to Shamayim, favorable to people and favorable to himself” — therefore, as the Maharsha continues to explain, “Rabbi Yehuda mentioned that someone who strives to become a chassid should fulfill matters of Nezikin; and consequently will perfect his behavior that is favorable for people. Rava mentioned that a person should fulfill matters [discussed] of Pirkei Avos and consequently perfect his behavior that is favorable for his personality. The others said one should fill matters of Brachos and hence perfect that which is favorable to Shamayim.”

The Maharsha concludes by emphasizing that there is no dispute among the opinions, all three opinions agree, “Each one of the Amaroim chose one of the three favorable aspects of human behavior.” By referring to the Rambam in

the Preface to Shemoneh Perekim, we can notice that the Maharsha is echoing what the Rambam wrote four hundred years earlier regarding the aforementioned Gemara in Baba Kama, “They have already said, may peace be upon them, ‘Someone who wants to become a chassid should fulfill matters of Avos.’ We have no status higher than chassidus except for prophecy. Like as it has been said, ‘holiness leads to Ruach HaKadosh’ Thus, it is clear from these words that the concern for personal improvement in this Mesechta [of Pirkei Avos] leads to prophecy because it [Pirkei Avos] contains a large amount [of teachings relevant to achieving] excellence of personality.”

Mishanyos – Phil Sevrinsky

We are continuing in the fourth perek of Mesachet Eduyos which states the twenty three laws where we note the more lenient rulings of Beit Shammai and the stricter rulings of Beit Hillel. The ninth mishna just as the eighth deals with a special case involving yibum, performing levirate marriage where a surviving brother marries a childless widow, not performing it through the act of chalitzah, or not requiring either. To help understand the background, we note that the first mishna in kiddushin states that a woman can be “acquired”, betrothed, in three ways, through 1) giving money (at least a perutah or its value) 2) a shtar, document, or 3) the act of cohabitation with a woman in the name of kiddushin. The first two methods are called ma’amar where one has expressed his intent to betroth the woman and then later consummate the marriage with cohabitation. Our mishna deals with the case where there are three brothers, two of the them married to two sisters, and the third one unmarried. Then one of the married brothers died and the unmarried brother performed ma’amar with his brother’s widow. What would happen if before he consummated the marriage with the widow the second married brother also died?

Beit Shammai holds that if the previously unmarried brother performed ma’amar with the first widow then this is as an act of yibum then she is considered his full wife, and he may remain with that widow and the second widow would then be free to marry anyone else even without chalitzah because she is still considered the “wife’s sister”, the other brother’s widow. Beit Hillel says that he must release the first widow with both a get and chalitzah and the second widow with chalitzah. The reason of chalitzah for both is that he normally would be required to perform yibum with each wife but since they are sisters he is not allowed either of them. However, since the ma’amar with the first widow binds him to her so in order to release himself from that bond, a get would also be required. Since he cannot marry either, it is said “woe to him because of his wife and his brother’s wife”.

We learn from this various matters. We again learn the importance of studying the laws of kiddushin, gittin, yibum and chalitzah and to the study of forbidden relationships. We see how we should always maintain

our purity in relationships and strive to find the proper life partner. Again we are taught to respect the rulings of Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel as representing valid ideas in their own way fulfilling the dictum “these and those are the words of the living G-d”. We again see how we cannot assume which school we should emulate, no matter who is strict and who is lenient, but rather must follow the chachamim to ascertain the final halachic ruling. Finally, even though things do not always work out the way we would expect, we should be thankful to Hashem and realize that He always has our best interests in mind.

Parasha Puzzler” –Answer:~~~With Binyamin Moore~~~****

Answer:

In Tanach there is no explicit mention that Yocheved had any more children.

However, Targum Yonasan ben Uzi’el on Bemidbar 11:26 states that the two men who prophesied in the camp, Eldad and Meidad, were the sons of Yocheved from another marriage – for when Amram initially divorced her after Par’oh enacted his decree (see Rashi Shemos 2:1), she then married Elitzafan ben Parnach, the future leader of the tribe of Zevulun (see Bemidbar 34:25), and from him bore two sons, Eldad and Meidad. This means that Eldad and Meidad were maternal brothers of Moshe and Aharon!

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