



9 years of Points to Ponder on

Parashas Shemos

Learning in the Shul this week is graciously sponsored by Elana & Nachi Feit and Yaffa & Jon Walzman in memory of Elana & Yaffa's grandfather Mr. Abraham Irwin Avraham Chaim ben Tzvi

**Intro to Shemos** – The **Ramban** notes that the book of creation is completed with the end of Parshas VaYechi. The book of Shemos begins a new chapter in the lives of the Jewish people and their destiny. How do we understand the change? **Rav Wolbe ztl.** explains that the difference is in the style. In Berashis Hashem identifies himself only from a distance. In Shemos his involvement is openly apparent. He quotes **the Rashba** who notes that in the Friday night Kiddush we highlight these aspects. When referencing creation we make references to Hashem in the third person. When we switch to Yetzias Mitzrayim, we use the second person voice. Sefer Shemos is called Sefer Geulah not only because of the redemption of the nation but also of the revelation of the name of Hashem in the world.

**אֵ֗לֶּה שְׁמוֹת֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל These are the names of Bnei Yisrael (1:1) – Rashi** comments that Hashem sees us like the stars and loves us hence he wants to count us all of the time. Why are we compared to the stars? Wouldn’t it be better to be compared to the sun which offers a lot of light all by itself? **Rav Moshe Shapiro ztl**. quoted **Rav Leib Bakst ztl**. who explained that the sun was created to provide light and warm the earth in order to make things grow. The moon was created to illuminate and control the tides. However, the stars were created as a result of the shrinking of the moon in order to provide assistance. Just as the stars are created only to provide support and comfort to their creative purpose, Bnei Yisrael exist only to do the will of Hashem and to assist the world at large.

**וְיוֹסֵ֖ף הָיָ֥ה בְמִצְרָֽיִם And Yosef was in Mitzrayim (1:5) - Rashi** notes that although he was in Mitzrayim, he was part of the 70 and the Torah is highlighting to us that he was the same tzaddik when working with the sheep as he was when he was viceroy. But why is his Tziddkus a discussion now during the census of names? **Rav Yitzchak Koppleman ztl.** noted that in order to get through Galus, the Jews needed to know that they could make it. Yosef, who had gone done to Egypt as a poor shepherd of 17, was a model for passing the tests of Galus. When we count the people going into Galus, we wanted them to know that among them were those who already passed them and could be models to look up to in trying times.

**וְכֹ֖ל הַדּ֥וֹר הַהֽוּא And the entire generation (1:6) - Rashi** says that while any member of the Shevatim was alive, there was no Shibbud. **Sforno** explained that as long as a member of the previous generation was still alive, the younger generations were able to maintain their spiritual level. Yet, in Parshas VaYechi, Rashi notes that the Shibbud had started while Yaakov was still alive. How are we to make sense of this apparent contradiction? **Rav Dov Schwartzman, ztl** distinguishes between two forms of *shibud*, enslavement. On the one hand, the eyes and heart of the people became closed in response to the upcoming enslavement They experienced *timtum ha’lev*, “a stuffed/oppressed heart.” with the depression, hopelessness, that is a symptom of *timtum ha’lev.* The Egyptian mindset took over their lives. They no longer expressed the emotions of hope for the future, and joy of life in the present that had infused them when Yaakov had been alive. The end of the generation intensified these feelings and required the people to look forward to a future beyond slavery, it was which they could not see.

**בִּמְאֹ֣ד מְאֹ֑ד And they multiplied by many multitudes (1:7)** – Why is it called B’Meod Meod? Why not Meod Meod? **Rav Ovadiah Yosef ztl.** explains that the first way the people grew, was financial. (B’Chol Meodecha) It was because of the wealth that the Egyptians despised the Jews. Hence, they tried to tax them to death. It was also the reason that the Egyptians paid back from the 10 Makkos – Eser – from Oisher.

**הָ֥בָה נִתְחַכְּמָ֖ה ל֑וֹ  Let us outthink them (1:10)** – The Haggada refers to this as VaYareiu Osanu haMitzrayim**. Rav Shach ztl.** notes that it does not say, that the Mitzrayim were bad TO us but rather they made us bad. This teaches us that the Jews themselves got infected with the Egyptian style. Rav Shach explains that this was possible not because of a particular event but rather due to being steeped in the general culture. He adds that the antidote to this problem is the need to constantly be aware of the tendency toward assimilation and to label attempts in order not to succumb to them.

**וְנוֹסַ֤ף גַּם־הוּא֙ עַל־שׂ֣נְאֵ֔ינוּ וְנִלְחַם־בָּ֖נוּ  It may be that if a war will occur, they will join our enemies (1:10) - Rav Schachter Shlita** pointed out to us that the Mitzrim accused the Jews of not being faithful, loyal citizens of the country challenging our patriotism. This has been a regular accusation throughout the millennia to promote an antisemitic agenda. At times, we are parasites, at others we control the economy and are responsible for a poor economy. In the end, VaYareiyu -- they made us into evil in any way they could -- because objectively, we integrate in our host countries and contribute to the country’s welfare more than any other.

**וַיַּֽעֲבִ֧דוּ מִצְרַ֛יִם אֶת־בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל: And Egypt enslaved the Jews with back-breaking labor and they embittered their lives… with back-breaking labor (1:13)** – Why the repeat of the Perach? **Rav Nosson Gestetner Ztl.** cites Tosafos (Sotah 11a) that the work that was done was for naught…and in addition, it was sought out for the Jew. In other words, the only purpose was to make the Jewish life miserable.

**וַיַּֽעֲבִ֧דוּ מִצְרַ֛יִם אֶת־בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל: And Mitzrayim enslaved Bnei Yisrael with Perach (1:13)** There is a strange Midrash that notes a Machlokes if the Slavery was with Kal VaChomer or Gezaira Shava. What does that mean? **Rav Shlomo Gantzfried** explains that both ideas assume that it was the sweet talk that enslaved the Jews. The side that held – Kal VaChomer understood that the job started easy (Kal) and subsequently got harder and harder (VaChomer). The other opinion noted that originally everyone in Egypt was called to do the job equally but eventually it was only the Jews who were enslaved (Originally Gezaira Shava for all inhabitants but later just the Jews).

**וְלֹ֣א עָשׂ֔וּ כַּֽאֲשֶׁ֛ר דִּבֶּ֥ר אֲלֵיהֶ֖ן מֶ֣לֶךְ מִצְרָ֑יִם They didn’t do that which was said unto them (1:17)** - The Talmud notes the strange word אליהן instead of להן. Why? Rav Yosef Bar Chaninah explains that Pharaoh wanted to use them in גילוי עריות. But why is this idea tucked in here, in regard to the killing of babies? **Rav Zaidel Epstein ztl.** explained that the protective shield of the Jewish people is the Kedushas Yisrael. Pharaoh knew that even with the command to kill the babies, the people would rather give up their lives than comply. He knew this power came from the Kedusha and thus sought to pierce the shield by introducing Tumah to it through inter-relations. But it didn’t work. They didn’t give in to the intended breech.

**וַיִּקְרָ֤א מֶֽלֶךְ־מִצְרַ֨יִם֙ לַֽמְיַלְּדֹ֔ת וַיֹּ֣אמֶר לָהֶ֔ן The king of Egypt said to the Jewish midwives (1:18)** - What did he say to them? After all, it DOES say VaYomer TWICE? **Rav Dr. Norman Lamm ztl** explained that he tried to get the women to change their Jewish names to secular ones (Shifra and Puah) but it didn’t stick.

**כָּל־הַבֵּ֣ן הַיִּלּ֗וֹד הַיְאֹ֨רָה֙ תַּשְׁלִיכֻ֔הוּ: Every male child born to you shall be tossed in to the Nile (1:22)** – The Talmud (Sotah 12a) notes the length that Pharaoh went to avoid the fear he experienced as a result of the prognostications of his magicians. He was so afraid of the Jewish savior that he had the babies tossed in the Nile and killed off even the children of his own people in order to get away from a fear of the future. Ironically, it was this very plan that had Moshe brought to his own home and raised right under his nose. The **Steipler ztl.** comments that the whole story teaches us that man’s plans do not help one iota when they are in conflict with Hashem’s master plan. We see a similar point in Megillas Esther when Haman too, planned his plan and it was exactly his plan to defeat the Jewish people that served as the point of Yeshua – salvation and the means of defeating him. The Steipler adds that Hishtadlus can be best understood in this context – doing what you can to bring about Hashem’s plan – not your own.

**כָּל־הַבֵּ֣ן הַיִּלּ֗וֹד הַיְאֹ֨רָה֙ תַּשְׁלִיכֻ֔הוּ: All male babies born shall be cast into the sea (1:22)**– The **Midrash t**ells a story of how Pharaoh discussed this matter with his three parliamentarians – Yisro, Bilaam and Iyov. Yisro spoke out and had to run away. Bilaam spoke up against the Jews and for the extermination plan while Iyov said nothing. In the future, Hashem paid each one back in kind: To Yisro who thought that the plan was unjust, and he left the parliament over it, his children merited to be members of the Sanhedrin, the ultimate parliament. Bilaam who condemned the Jews to death, was sentenced to death himself – by the sword. But, asks the **Brisker Rav ztl.**, how was Iyov’s punishment – suffering – Middah K’Negged Middah? **Rav Shalom Schwadron ztl**. explained that when Chazal tell us that he was punished for being silent, it means that he calculated that in his mind, this issue was not worth it to protest openly in that it would not matter anyway. To that, Hashem told him that when people are in pain, one does not make a calculation, we do what we can to alleviate a human’s suffering. Thus, Hashem gave him suffering whereby he would cry out in the same manner that he should have for the Jewish parents at this trying time.

**כָּל־הַבֵּ֣ן הַיִּלּ֗וֹד הַיְאֹ֨רָה֙ תַּשְׁלִיכֻ֔הוּ: Any male child born shall be cast into the Yior and the daughters shall live (1:22) – Rav Norman Lamm Shlita** points out the national hypocrisy in the intentions of Pharaoh. First, he does not announce a genocide, he tries to hire a group of midwives to do the dirty work for him. When this failed, he needed to sanction murder as state policy. But he limits himself to baby boys and he notes that it was not limited to the Jews but rather it was part of the national cult. Rav Lamm notes that most of the story does not speak of the average Egyptian when assessing blame because it was not he who tried to deny it. The message is true throughout history as well.

**וְכָל־הַבַּ֖ת תְּחַיּֽוּן And all daughters you shall let live (1:22)** – Why does the Torah highlight this aspect of the ruling of Pharaoh? **Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl** noted that it too, is part of the Gezaira. When we create a situation where we have a strong disparity between the young men and the women, we create a situation where the latter seek comfort elsewhere. This was part of Pharaoh’s plan – to make a limit on the supply of “good” boys so that the Jewish women would seek out wisdom and companionship in the intellectual halls of the secular culture and get the Jewish girls that way.

**וְכָל־הַבַּ֖ת תְּחַיּֽוּן And all the daughters shall live (1:22) – Rav Chaim Kanievski Shlita**explained that this too, was part of the torture of Pharaoh to counter the concern of population control. In other words, not only would he diminish the number of men and by extension, families of the Jews, he would leave the girls single and extend the other populations when they could not marry. **Rav Nosson Gestetner Ztl.** notes the difference between this Possuk and that of 1:16 – between V’Chaya and Tichayun noting that the boys he would kill outright and the females he would put on governmental programs to feed them – from the foods of the Goyim which would damage the souls.

**וילך איש מבית לוי  A man went from the house of Levi  (2:1)** – Why do we not identify Moshe’s parents at this point**? Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** explains that when a child is born, even when the child is born with supernatural circumstances as was with Moshe, it is too early for parents to take credit for the child. Only when a parent sees the child reach his or her true potential can the parents take credit for raising him. Even when Moshe stepped up and saved the  עברי being beaten by the מצרי, Moshe’s parents’ names are not yet revealed because Moshe did not just merely possess the power of מסירות נפש for one’s fellow man, he also had the power to be Moshe Rabbeinu.  Only when Moshe was selected to take Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim do we find the names of Amram and Yocheved mentioned explicitly in the Torah for being able to properly encourage him to achieve his fullest potential. **Rav Belsky ztl.** adds that parents sometimes sell their children short – encouraging them to reach potentials that are great but not letting them get to their fullest potential in their existence – to become all that they can be.

**וילך איש מבית לוי  And a man from the house of Levi went and married the daughter of Levi (2:1) – Rav Dovid Stav Shlita** notes that except at the beginning of the Parsha, the name Shemos is actually ironic. Fo throghout the Parsha names do not appear prominently. Why? Rav Stav explains that the book of Shemos is really about the building of a nation. A nation does not only require leaders, it requires the Hamon Am – the regular members of the nation prepared to assume their respective roles in creating the nation even if it is without major fanfare. The dedication of the nation to each other is what brings about Geulah.

**וַתֵּֽתַצַּ֥ב אֲחֹת֖וֹ מֵֽרָחֹ֑ק And his sister stood at a distance to know what would happen to him (2:4)** – Chazal tell us that Miriam had predicted (based on Nevuah) that her mother would have a baby who would save the Jewish nation. When the baby was put into the river, her father hit her on the head and asked her “what happened to your Nevuah now?” **Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ztl.** notes that Miriam remained unflustered. She stood steadfast to know exactly how what she believed was going to turn out. (Yatziv)

**ותשלח את אמתה  She sent forth her hand and took it (2:5**) – The Talmud (Megillah 15b) notes that her hand grew 60 Amos. Why 60 Amos? **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky Shlita** explains that Moshe’s saving represents  the message of he who transmits the Torah to Bnei Yisrael. The transmission of Torah does not happen without Siyata D’Shmaya – hence the miracle of extending her hand. And the 60 Amos? They are representative of the 60 Mesechtos of Torah Shel Baal Peh.

**וְהִנֵּה־נַ֖עַר בֹּכֶ֑ה And behold the Naar cried (2:6) – Rashi** notes that his voice was like that of a Naar**. Ramban** explains that such an impediment makes Moshe into a Baal Mum which we prefer to avoid. **Rav Nebenzahl Shlita** explained that the issue depends on how we view Moshe. If Moshe is a Kohein who was able to serve --- then his voice is not a Mum. Only a regular Levi, whose job it is to sing is Pasul with his voice (Chullin 24a), for that was his primary job in the Mikdash.

**הַֽאֵלֵ֗ךְ וְקָרָ֤אתִי לָךְ֙ אִשָּׁ֣ה מֵינֶ֔קֶת Should I call a nursemaid from the Jewish women? (2:7) –** **Rashi**quotes from the Midrash that Moshe felt that a mouth that would ultimately speak with the Shechina should not take from a non-Jewish source.  **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky ztl.** notes that although one could use a non-Jewish source, but why should a person cheat his child from a chance to speak with the Shechina? (Assuming it is not necessary). **Rav Schachter Shlita**added that the same thing is true today – with Yichus – that we should not just see things as a Middas Chassidus but that Hashem expresses his Shechina only on the Mishpachos Hamiyuchasos.

**הַֽאֵלֵ֗ךְ וְקָרָ֤אתִי לָךְ֙ אִשָּׁ֣ה מֵינֶ֔קֶת מִ֖ן הָֽעִבְרִיֹּ֑ת A nursemaid from the Jews (2:7) - Rashi** notes that the princess tried to get the baby to nurse from the Egyptian nursemaids and he didn’t since, he reasoned,  a mouth destined to speak to the Shechina cannot have Tumah residue in it. The **Rashba** notes that we see from here that the nature passes on from nurse to child and influences the child. This idea is codified in **Shulchan Aruch** (YD 81:7 See Rema). **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** asked what the proof was if Moshe was different simply because he was destined to speak with the Shechina. Maybe the rest of the babies are not so destined and nursing now would be better? He answers that the Torah considers every child to have the potential of Moshe and every parent to have in mind that their kids are destined to speak with the Shechina. **Rav Shach ztl.** added that every person DOES speak with the Shechina each and every day through Berachos and Tefillos. Thus, we need to prepare ourselves as Moshe did.

**וַתִּקְרָ֤א שְׁמוֹ֙ משֶׁ֔ה  And she called him Moshe since she had drawn him from the water (2:10)** – The wording Moshe seems to focus on where he was headed not where he came from – why call him Moshe?  **Rav Shlomo of Belz** ztl. once noted that where the head comes from is where the person is headed. If Moshe came from water which always is associated with reaching out to others and taking on their forms, so it would be with Moshe – always moving forward to reach out to others.

**ויצא משה אל אחו וירא בסבלותם  And Moshe went out among his brothers and saw their distress (2:11) –** What does this Possuk mean? **Rav Sabato Shlita** explains that this possuk  serves to show us the greatness of Moshe who, having grown up in the palace of Pharaoh and later merely lived in Yisro’s home, still developed a sense of responsibility and kindred spirit with the slaves. It would have been impossible to have a leader grow from the slave mentality to get the people to complete and total emancipation but it also would have been impossible for the leader to identify with the people without the intervention of Hashem in both spheres – a person who would appreciate and feel for the people while seeing beyond their ability to see and help them reach freedom.

**וַיִּגְדַּ֤ל משֶׁה֙ וַיֵּצֵ֣א אֶל־אֶחָ֔יו Moshe grew big (2:11)** - In what way? **Chasam Sofer** explained that he grew great in the eyes of Hashem as he became aware of the Tzaros of the Jewish people. **Rav Moshe Tzuriel Shlita** added that great people do not merely think about their own interests, they think about the interests of the entire Jewish people.

**וַיַּ֖רְא כִּ֣י אֵ֣ין אִ֑ישׁ And he turned this way and that way and saw that there was no man (2:12)** – **Rabbi Aharon Ziegler Shlita** once commented that often in life we look to our left and our right to see if someone will stand up for that which is correct. When Moshe saw that no one was doing so, he took responsibility. He did not ask if it was “worth it”. He responded. Shouldn’t we?

**וַיַּ֖רְא כִּ֣י אֵ֣ין אִ֑ישׁ He saw that there was no man (2:12) - Rashi** comments that he saw in the future that there was no one to come from this Egyptian. **Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon Shlita** adds that he saw no one prepared to stand up for what was the right thing do, in that backdrop, he had the responsibility to be the person. Moshe continues this ideal throughout his life -- namely that he remains the “Ish” who rises to the needs of the moment for his family and for his people. (**Rav Motel Katz ztl.** defined Ish as referring to being a mentsch, a prerequisite for being a Tzaddik or a Yirai Shomayim.)

**אכן נודע הדבר The matter has become known (2:14) – Rashi** quotes from the Midrash that the matter that became apparent was why the Jews were in Galus. If we snitch on one another instead of joining together, it leads to Galus – not Geulah. **Rav Schachter Shlita** quoted the **Maharal**who says Geulah only happens when there is a sense of צניעות – not blabbering on one another. When we lead a life of Tzniyus then we have a madreiga for Geulah. We are only entitled to Geulah if we are צנועים. **Rav Schachter Shlita** often reminds us that Hashem is a קאל מסתתר, he moves as a צנועה and expects the same of us.

**וַיּ֥וֹאֶל משֶׁ֖ה לָשֶׁ֣בֶת אֶת־הָאִ֑ישׁ And Moshe swore to stay with the man (2:21)** – The Midrash comments that Moshe swore to allow his firstborn son to be brought up through the ideology of Avodoa Zara. How could Moshe agree to such a request? And how could Yisro who had already rejected Avoda Zara request it? **Rav Yisroel Lau Shita** explains that Moshe and Yisro never intended to have the child raised in the ways of Avoda Zara. Rather, Yisro wanted Moshe to raise his family in Midyan where he would be able to influence the Midyanites. However, in the process, it might have a deleterious effect on his family.  Indeed, the Midrash notes that in the future, the children of Gershom were open to the tragedy of Pesel Michah as a result.

**וַיָּ֨מָת֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ מִצְרַ֔יִם וַיֵּאָֽנְח֧וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֛ל מִן־הָֽעֲבֹדָ֖ה וַיִּזְעָ֑קוּ**  **And the king of Egypt died and they cried and their cries went to Hashem as a result of the work (2:24) – Rav Yechiel Yitzchak Perr Shlita** would often quote his father Rav Menachem Perr ztl. who would note that initially people would think that the slavery was the result of the king and that once he expired so would the slavery. This was not to be the case. It was only thereafter, when they saw that their simple explanation failed, that they cried and set their sights heavenward. Rav Perr Shlita adds that this was the challenge Moshe asks of Hashem when he declares “When they ask me for His name what should I say?” He explained that the people were confused for Hashem was always in the background for the Avos and Moshe wanted to know how to bring the message that he would be in the forefront for them.

**וַיַּ֥רְא אֱלֹקים אֶת־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וַיֵּ֖דַע אֱלֹקים Hashem saw Bnei Yisrael and Hashem knew (2:25)** - What did he see and why the emphasis on the fact that he knew? **Rav Yaakov Perlow, Novominsker Rebbe ztl**. explained that there are 2 perceptions here, one of seeing and one of knowing. Hashem was able to see the surface utilizing Middas HaDin to see that they needed the Shibbud but on a deeper level that only Hashem is able to see, he was able to figure that the people were involved in personal cries of Teshuva and he was able to see them more fully including evaluating their unspeakable Emunah.

**וַיַּ֥רְא אֱלֹק֖ים אֶת־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וַיֵּ֖דַע אֱלֹקֽים Hashem saw Bnei Yisrael and Hashem knew (2:25)** - In the Haggada we use this Possuk to highlight the Prishus Derech Eretz - the interruption of family life. How? Why is the proof so vague? **Rav Schachter Shlita** would remind us that Middas HaTzniyus requires us to be discreet in the language that we use when and where discussing matters relating to intimacy. When it comes to family life, the Torah is discreet. Here too, since the Torah uses a series of obscure descriptions, it MUST refer to issues of marital intimacy.

**מַדּ֖וּעַ לֹֽא־יִבְעַ֥ר הַסְּנֶֽה But the bush was not consumed (3:3)** - Why does the Possuk use the word Yivar (active) instead of Nivar (passive)? **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl.** explained that the symbol was a reference to the heart of the bush. The amazing thing was that the heart of the bush -- symbolic of the Jew in Galus. On the one hand Galus hides the power of the Jew making him feel low and at the same time Nitzchiyus does not allow him to burn himself out and give up hope.

**משֶׁ֥ה משֶׁ֖ה Moshe Moshe (3:4)** – As opposed to the Avraham Avraham and the Yaakov Yaakov where there is a bar between the name, by Moshe it is not so. Why? **Rav Schachter Shlita** quoted **Rav Chaim of Volozhin** who explains that there is only one who lived up to his greatest potential. That was Moshe. Hence, there is no bar between the potential person who was Moshe and the person who became Moshe. Rav Schachter Shlita added that it is incumbent upon each person to consider what is expected of him and to try to live up to his potential – without a bar.

**משֶׁ֥ה משֶׁ֖ה And Hashem called out to him “Moshe,  Moshe” (3:4)**– The midrash cites the comment that similar to Yosef who was equally as committed when he was a shepard as when he was a viceroy so too, with Moshe when he was a shepard so too, when he was a leader – he didn’t change. How is that possible? We know that Moshe grew from the experience at Maamad Har Sinai? How could he be the same person. **Rav Shteinman Shlita** suggests that he was forward focused on spiritual improvement in the same way before speaking to Hashem as afterward.

**של נעליך מעל רגליך   Take the shoes off your feet (3:5) – The Chofetz Chaim ztl.**explained that sometimes people think that the daily grind of life prevents them from achieving their goals. Nothing could be further from the truth. The ground we stand on – at all times --- is holy ground. We need to take off the shoes and any other impediment to experiencing Hashem’s presence.

**של נעליך מעל רגליך   Remove your shoes from your feet (3:5)** – Why does it make a difference if a person wears shoes on his feet when he is in a holy place? **Rav Mattisyahu Solomon Shlita**explains that shoes are man’s way of showing leadership over the rest of the world. When man puts on shoes he makes a Beracha שעשה לי כל צרכי because Hashem is the one who gave him that opportunity. When in the presence of the one who gave you the power, it is only appropriate to demonstrate a sense of humility in the presence of the one who really wields the power over all of the earth – hence we remove our shoes.

**שַׁל־נְעָלֶ֨יךָ֙ מֵעַ֣ל רַגְלֶ֔יךָ Take your shoes off your feet (3:5) - Rav Zevin ztl.** explained that shoe serve the purpose of protecting the foot from filth and from thorns -- from dangers of interacting with the world. In the Mikdash or the presence of Hashem, shoes are unnecessary as Hashem provides that protection.

**אַל־תִּקְרַ֣ב הֲלֹ֑ם שַׁל־נְעָלֶ֨יךָ֙ מֵעַ֣ל רַגְלֶ֔יךָ Don’t come close to here, take your shoes off (3:5)** – Why must Moshe take off his shoes if he is not to come close to here? **Rav Mattisyahu Solomon Shlita** explained that there were 2 Kedushos at the Sneh – the first was the Kedusha of the Sneh itself – akin to that of the Shechina. To that Kedusha, one cannot get too close for it is too bright as the Shechina. However, the second Kedusha comes from being at the experience and what merely being there does for the person. For that which he becomes in that moment, he must remove his shoes. Speaking in the forest where the entire Kelm community was murdered, Rav Mattisyahu added that we cannot fathom the Kedusha of those murdered Al Kiddush Hashem but we certainly CAN become more kadosh from standing and learning from their actions and making it ours. (Compare to **Rav Elazar M. Teitz** Shlita’s comment that while we cannot always walk in the shoes of the great ones, we most certainly can walk in their footsteps.)

**וְגַם־רָאִ֨יתִי֙ אֶת־הַלַּ֔חַץ And I’ve also seen the pressure put on them from the Egyptians (3:9)**– There are 2 words, LAchatz and Dichak that seem to be the same but are quite different. **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl** notes that Dichak is a quantitative hardship – more hours of backbreaking work was demanded. Lachatz refers to the qualitative aspect of the job – an awareness that no matter how long or hard you worked, you were never to be done and were always under pressure knowing that it would not be good enough.

**מִ֣י אָנֹ֔כִי כִּ֥י אֵלֵ֖ךְ אֶל־פַּרְעֹ֑ה Who am I to go to Pharaoh and to take Bnei Yisrael from Eretz Mitzrayim (3:11) – Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl.** sees that there are 2 jobs here – to find the language to speak to the outside leadership and then to guide the broken nation and the discord that existed internally. Moshe was nervous about both jobs and whether he would be able to handle the different styles needed to handle both issues.

**בְּהוֹצִֽיאֲךָ֤ אֶת־הָעָם֙ מִמִּצְרַ֔יִם תַּֽעַבְדוּן֙ You will serve Hashem on this mountain (3:12)** - What kind of sign is something that will not have happened yet? The **Parashas Derachim** explains that Hashem judges us based on what we have done. However, he demonstrates extra Chessed for what someone will be able to become**. Rav Yisrael Reisman Shlita** demonstrates this in regard to the selection of Ephraim and Menashe and the greatness of each based on who will come from them.

**וְזֶה־לְּךָ֣ הָא֔וֹת כִּ֥י אָֽנֹכִ֖י שְׁלַחְתִּ֑יךָ בְּהוֹצִֽיאֲךָ֤ אֶת־הָעָם֙ מִמִּצְרַ֔יִם תַּֽעַבְדוּן֙  This is the sign that I have sent you, when you take the people out of Egypt you will serve Hashem on this mountain (3:12) - Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that Hashem had appointed Moshe to do 2 different jobs. First, he appointed Moshe as a Shaliach to speak to Pharaoh and also to be the leader of Am Yisrael. Moshe demurred both assignments arguing that he was inadequate for both. Hashem told him that this was not going to be a normal Shlichus -- as Hashem would be there every step of the way and in regard to the second, he was to be the leader not in a secular political way but rather as a teacher. For the second job there was no one as good as Moshe. The proof? The idea that the ultimate freedom was serving Hashem on Har Sinai.

**אֶֽקיֶ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר אֶֽקיֶ֑ה I will be who I will be (3:14)** - What does his name of Hashem mean to us? **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl.** explained that this name of Hashem is based on the relationship and how we see him and how he reflects back to us. In Tehillim we say, “Give Hashem Kavod and Strength” that when we demonstrate love to Hashem, He reflects it back to us -- K’mayim HaPanim L’Panim.

**יען משה ויאמר והן לא יאמינו לי ולא ישמעו לקוליMoshe responded and said they shall not believe me and will not hear my voice (4:1)**– Why the double language? **Rav Gifter Ztl**. explained that the power of שמיעה covers those situations where the listener cannot get to the depth of that being said to him. The listener merely hears and then does – he does not listen. Moshe refers to the fact that the people will not believe  and as a result they will be unable to listen. One they don’t listen, the noise from my lips will become insignificant to them.

**וְהֵן֙ לֹא־יַֽאֲמִ֣ינוּ לִ֔י They will not believe me (4:1)** - Hashem chastises Moshe for this comment arguing that his children are Maaminim Bnei Maaminim. But in next week’s Parasha we indeed find that they could not listen to Moshe because of the Kotzer Ruach. Could Hashem have been wrong? **Rav Yisrael Reisman Shlita** explained that in order for someone to inspire Emunah, Bitachon and the like, one needs to speak of it with confidence. If you do not, then they will not be able to hear you.

**וְהֵן֙ לֹא־יַֽאֲמִ֣ינוּ לִ֔י  They will not believe me (4:1) – Rav Schachter Shlita** would often point out to us that there was a dual nature to the power of Nevuah of Moshe. One part of the Nevuah was the overpowering power of prophesy of Horaas Shaah. This power needed the signs that all Neviim need to bring in order to prove their right to prophesize. The Nevuah of the Halachos was L’Doros and didn’t need confirmation and came with Shechina Midaberes MiToch Grono without the speech difficulties.

**שְׁלַח֙ יָֽדְךָ֔ וֶֽאֱחֹ֖ז בִּזְנָב֑וֹ Send your hand and grab its tail (4:4)** - Shouldn’t it have been smarter and safer to grab from the behind the snake’s head rather than from the tail whereby it could have recoiled and bit Moshe? **Rav Yechiel Perr Shlita** explained that Hashem wanted us to know that Bitachon requires us to listen to Hashem even when logic seems to dictate a different path.

**שְׁלַח־נָ֖א בְּיַד־תִּשְׁלָֽח Send someone else (4:13)** – The Midrash notes that Yosef had given Bnei Yisrael the magic words of Pakod Yifkod as the key words to identify the Go’el. If everyone knew them, what was the secret? What stopped ANYONE from using them**? Rav Betzalel Rudinsky Shlita** quoted a second Misrash that notes that Yosef’s secret was in the words Pakod through Rachel and Pakaditee through Leah. In other words, the Galus happened because of the sibling rivalry. Its ending has to come through the end of the sibling rivalry. Hence, Moshe demurred the mission from Hashem because he felt Aharon should’ve been sent first. Hashem noted that Aharon had already quieted the possibility of a rivalry from his perspective. It was the ultimate setting for the achieving the Geulah.

**ויאמר הלא אהרן אחיך הלוי ידעתי כי דבר ידבר הוא He said “behold your brother Aharon, the Levi  I know that he will speak (4:14)** – **Rashi**explains that Aharon was supposed to be a Levi and you the Kohein but Hashem will now change that. What is the מידה כנגד מידה  in that punishment? **Rav Meir Shapiro ztl.** explains that Moshe was amazed that a miraculously repaired mouth would be used for anything other than Kedusha. To that Hashem explained that originally I expected Aharon to have been the one to use his voice in my service but based on your argument, it will now be you. In essence, Hashem was telling Moshe that his argument was a sound one – and his voice would indeed be the way he would service Hashem.

**וְרָֽאֲךָ֖ וְשָׂמַ֥ח בְּלִבּֽוֹ: When he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart (4:14)**– The Midrash comments that Hashem told Moshe that his impression that Aharon would be insulted is unfounded. He would be happy. And the heart that wears the Urim V’Tumim  would be thus rewarded. The **Tanchuma** takes this further: When the Possuk declares Mi Yitencha K’Ach Lee – it means that brothers technically do not get along and from the beginning of time (Kayin and Hevel), they’ve hated one another. **Rav Gifter ztl.** added that we see how even the greatest of people have had sibling rivalries and those who overcome it deserve to praise Hashem in the Mikdash.

**רְאֵ֗ה כָּל־הַמֹּֽפְתִים֙ אֲשֶׁר־שַׂ֣מְתִּי בְיָדֶ֔ךָ**  **When you return to Mitzrayim see the signs that I have placed in your hands and perform them before Pharaoh (4:21**) – The **Abarbanel** notes that after spending so much time on the need to take the Mateh, all of a sudden it disappears from Hashem’s instructions – and limited to the hand of Moshe. What happened to the Mateh? The Abarbanel answers that Hashem had encouraged Moshe to use it as a means of inspiration but that he did not want Moshe to use it as a magic crutch. **Rav Lamm Shlita** would often note the common nature of the Orthodox Jew to shirk his own responsibilities and focus on the crutch – be it the mezuzah-check or the latest Segulah or even the realm of Jewish Education wherein many do not see it as supplemental but rather as replacement for the hand of the person. Judaism recognizes that there are many Keilim to be used BY man in achieving a life-long Kesher with Hashem but it is man who must be responsible for that Kesher.

**בְּנִ֥י בְכֹרִ֖י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל My son, my Bechor Yisrael (4:22) – Sforno** notes that even in the future when the nations of the world will also call out to Hashem, it will be the Tefillos of Bnei Yisrael that Hashem prefers. **Rav Kook ztl.** explained why. He notes that although other nations will note the proper language to call to Hashem, Bnei Yisrael realize the sanctity of the tongue that calls to Hashem in that language and raises itself above. This is the reason why we note, *V’Romamtanu Mikol HaLeshonos* when highlighting our uniqueness to Hashem at the start of a Yom Tov. **Rav Mordechai Greenberg Shlita** added that this is one of the reasons why we can state that had Hashem brought us to Har Sinai and not given us the Torah it would have been enough. Dayeinu. Dayeinu, says Rav Moti, since the snake introduced poison into the children of man at the time of original sin. That poison stopped having effect on the Jewish people at Har Sinai allowing them to be different and their Tefillos more exalted.

**ויבקש המיתוAnd it was when they came to the hotel…and he sought to kill him (4:24)** – Why does a father get the death penalty for not giving a Bris to his son? The Torah only identifies Kares? **The Rambam** notes that we observe Mitzvos because Moshe told us to do so at Har Sinai – not because of Avraham.  **Rav Schachter Shlita quoted Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** who noted that when Moshe spoke the mitzvos it was L’Doros. When he didn’t so it was Divrei Novi for which one is liable for death. Moshe’s non-taking care of the Bris of his son was a violation of Divrei Novi for which he gets the death penalty.

**וַיִּשַּׁק־לֽוֹ**: **And they met at Har HaElokim and he kissed him (4:27) – Sforno** explains that he kissed him as one kisses something holy. Why does the Sorno care if he kissed him with reverence or as a brother who missed his brother long thought to be dead? **Rav Boruch Dov Povarsky Shlita** explained that this place was the place of the Shechina. It would be improper to use it for a personal expression. The only reason to express emotion would be because it is the emotion directed toward Hashem and holiness. Accordingly, the Sforno responds that the kiss was one of reverence.

**לְכ֖וּ לְסִבְלֹֽתֵיכֶֽם: Pharaoh told the people get back to work (5:4) – Rashi** comments that the slavery was on the shoulders of all of the Shevatim except Levi. **Chezkuni** explains that this is because Yaakov taught his Torah teaching ability to Levi and the Leviim went and established many Yeshiva systems in Mitzrayim as a result. That is what they knew. **Rav Gifter ztl.** asks that if this is indeed the case, why did Yaakov send YEHUDA and not LEVI to set up the first Yeshiva in Goshen? Rav Gifter answers that when we establish something, it must be anchored with a sense of royalty if it is to be structured to be successful. However, behind the royalty there needs to be faculty that is properly equipped to teach the Torah in the manner that it is meant to be taught – with teachers who are able to get through to their students. Sometimes in our generation there are institutions where this model is forgotten.

**לֹ֣א תֹֽאסִפ֞וּן לָתֵ֨ת תֶּ֧בֶן  Do not give them straw (5:7)- Rav Chanoch Henoch of Alexander ztl.** asked why Pharaoh didn’t simply add to the number of bricks required. Why subtract from the number and take away from the straw? He answers that we see that the torture of the soul is worse than the torture of the body. Pharaoh knew that not knowing where they’d get straw from, would torture them more than the extra requirement of the bricks.

**וַיֻּכּ֗וּ שֹֽׁטְרֵי֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל The Jewish police were beaten (5:14)** - Why was this important? Why does the Torah want us to know about this particular abuse of the Jewish nation? **Rav Yehuda Herzl Henkin ztl.** explained that this group was the closest with the Egyptians -- which is why they were appointed as the police. In order to bring the Geulah, this group needed to be shaken free from the Egypt and brought closer to the rest of the nation.

**יְגָֽרְשֵׁ֖ם מֵֽאַרְצֽו**ֹ: **You shall see that which I will do to Pharoah and that with a strong hand he will send you and chase you from his land (6:1)** – Why will it be necessary to “chase” the Jew from Mitzrayim? **Rav Mordechai Eliyahu ztl.** explains that when one leaves, one thinks that perhaps, if things do not work out well, s/he can return. Yet, when one is chased out, one knows that there is no turning back. Hashem wanted to be clear that Yetzias Mitzrayim was going to be a “no turning back” defining moment of Jewish destiny.

**Haftarah:**

**הַבָּאִים֙ יַשְׁרֵ֣שׁ יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב יָצִ֥יץ וּפָרַ֖ח יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל In coming times Yaakov will take root (Yeshayahu 27:6)** – In his Nevuah for the future, Yeshayahu notes that the nation will put down roots in Galus and will spread itself and the knowledge of Hashem throughout the world**. Rav Schwab ztl**. explained that the Galus experience is not only punitive. Rather, it was Hashem’s way of making us better. In Galus we put down roots to produce the people like the Tannaim  and Amoraim, Savuraim and Geonim, Rishonim and Achronim long before the nation blossoms into Yisrael.

**הַבָּאִים֙ יַשְׁרֵ֣שׁ יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב יָצִ֥יץ וּפָרַ֖ח יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל Those who are coming will set roots in Jacob and give off flowers of Israel (Isaiah 27:6)** – What is the connection between a prophesy about the days of king Chizkiyahu and the beginning of the slavery in Mitzrayim**? Rashi** notes that the Baim referenced in the Possuk referred to the children of Yaakov who came to Mitzrayim and became a multitude of nations. The Redak says that the Baim refers to days – that although it looks like the days are darker and the freedoms shrinking, in actuality the steps to Geulah are closer. **Rav Yosef Carmel Shlita** notes that these 2 commentaries are really not at odds. When the brothers came down to Mitzrayim and slowly and surely the beginnings of the slavery were felt, it would have been easy for them to fall into thoughts of Yiush – of abandon. Instead, the message of the Haftorah – similar to that of the Torah reading is that in the darkest moments, the best thing to do is build.

**הַבָּאִים֙ יַשְׁרֵ֣שׁ יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב יָצִ֥יץ וּפָרַ֖ח יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל Those who come are the roots planted by Yaakov, they will flower and sprout forward Yisrael (Yeshayahu 27:6) – Rav Mendel Kaplan ztl.** noted that the focus of the book of Shemos is more on the Geulah. In fact, the depth of the suffering is truncated by the text. Why? Rav Kaplan explained that the point of the story is like the point of the Haftara. Really, the theme of the book of Shemos is the growth of Am Yisrael. Where will the nation successfully sprout? It will happen in the place selected for plowing and weeding and gardening. Mitzrayim was one such place. Through the hard work, the nation sprouted forth.

**הַבָּאִים֙ יַשְׁרֵ֣שׁ יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב יָצִ֥יץ וּפָרַ֖ח יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל Those who come for whom Yaakov takes root will blossom and flourish (Yeshayahu 27:6) – Rav Yaakov Krantz ztl. Dubno Maggid,** noted that this selection for the Haftara for this week’s Parsha is especially poignant as like the Parsha which focuses on the tragedy surrounding the beginning of the slavery with little relief before the end, the Haftara reminds us that sometimes the cuts we suffer are part of the Geulah process. The maggid likens this to the cuts into a piece of cedar wood that are a part of forming the most beautiful of artistic furniture pieces. These too, are part of the Geulah.

**לָכֵ֗ן בְּזֹאת֙ יְכֻפַּ֣ר עֲו‍ֹֽן־יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב Therefore in this way, the sins of Yaakov shall be atoned (Yeshayahu 27:9) - Rav Shlomo Pines ztl.** explained that in truth, the punishment of Galus was meant to be more severe. However, if there is a benefit to the world with a lesser sentence, that is the sentence that should be followed. Here too, Hashem sent us into Galus in order to improve the world hence, although perhaps a more severe punishment was deserved, the Galus is an opportunity for us to atone with the lesser sentence. This too, is part of Hashem’s Chessed.

**בִּיבֹ֚שׁ קְצִירָהּ֙ תִּשָּׁבַ֔רְנָה As its branches dry up they become broken women come and burn it (Yeshaya 27:11) – Rav Shimon Schwab ztl**. notes that the description of desolation about Yirushalayim is severe but pales in comparison to the punishment that will happen to its enemies. Rav Schwab explains that the enemies of Israel will be totally destroyed but we will continue to exist. Using the “Mesha stone” as proof which notes that Meisha, king of Moav defeated Omri, king of Israel and that Israel is lost forever. Rav Schwab noted that the only remnant of Moav is the stone but the Jewish nation lives on and thrives.

**וְהָיָ֣ה | בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֗וּא יִתָּקַע֘ בְּשׁוֹפָ֣ר גָּדוֹל֒ And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great shofar shall be blown, and they shall come who were lost in the land of Ashur, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain of Jerusalem" (Yeshayahu 27:13)- Rav Tzaddok Hakohein of Lublin** distinguishes between the lost ones of Ashur who lose themselves in the anxiety of constantly pursuing wealth and other worldly gains so that they never stop to appreciate the Hashem behind the experience of the wealth.  The Mitzri spends all of his time so engrossed in relaxation and Zima, he will never pursue anything. **Rav Yehuda Amital ztl.** explains that both extremes are dangerous for a healthy growth of Avodas Hashem. One cannot live with total tension or he will not appreciate the presence of Hashem and one cannot live in total “tranquility” without constant striving for a better relationship with Hashem if s/he is to thrive in a life as a servant of Hashem.

**וְהָיָ֣ה | בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֗וּא יִתָּקַע֘ בְּשׁוֹפָ֣ר גָּדוֹל֒ וּבָ֗אוּ הָאֹֽבְדִים֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ אַשּׁ֔וּר וְהַנִּדָּחִ֖ים בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִםIt will be on that day that we will blow the big Shofar (Yeshayahu 27:14)** - What is the “big” Shofar? What is the difference between the lost ones of Ashur and the trapped of Mitzrayim? In Mitzrayim the Jews were broken down and wanted to run away. In Ashur, the Jews lived in relative physical comfort but were spiritually destroyed. **Ramchal** explains that a Shofar Gadol is the great Rachamim to gather even those who do not deserve Geulah based on the strict application of justice**. The Brisker Rav ztl** adds that this refers even to Jews who might have assimilated, the Shofar Gadol will call to them too.

**את מי יורה דעה...גמולי מחלב מעתיקי משדים To whom shall we teach knowledge…to those weaned from mother’s milk  (Yeshayahu 28:9)-**Yeshayahu gives mussar to the people about their endless seeking of earthly desires which caused them to leave Hashem. He calls their homes one filled with vomit – with no clean place, and no one left to handle the Torah transmission in the next generation. The Gemara (Sotah 12b) uses our Possuk as a context to understanding a famous midrash that Moshe Rabbeinu refused to accept nursing from a gentile woman. Indeed the Rema (Y.D. 81:7) notes that טמטום הלב  which results in a bad natured child is something that parents should protect children from. **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky ztl.** asks how is it that this is a requirement for every Jewish child if it is only Moshe Rabbeinu who was going to speak with the Shechina, who needed to be careful. Why do we learn from Moshe? Rav Yaakov answers that every Jewish child has the potential to become a Tzaddik like Moshe. The parents must remember this when raising their children and setting the goals for their lives as well.