Points to Ponder

Shemos 5782

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**כִּ֣י הַמָּק֗וֹם אֲשֶׁ֤ר אַתָּה֙ עוֹמֵ֣ד עָלָ֔יו אַדְמַת־קֹ֖דֶשׁ הֽוּא The land you are standing on is Kodesh (3:5)** - How? And why is shoe removal so important? The **Chofetz Chaim** quoted the **Vilna Gaon** who explained that there are times in life when we think we are stuck standing still in Jewish growth. But, the antidote is to recall that the land you are standing on, the stage you think you cannot move past, is a place of holiness – a vehicle for the very growth you seek. How do you grow within it? Take off your shoes – remove the barriers that hold you back from connecting to Kedusha and you will sense the opportunity and seize it.

**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.

**Haftara**

**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.