

Parshas Shemos in a Nutshell

(Exodus 1:1–6:1)

The children of Israel multiply in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers, Pharaoh enslaves them and orders the Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth. When they do not comply, he commands his people to cast the Hebrew babies into the Nile.

A child is born to Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, and her husband, Amram, and placed in a basket on the river, while the baby's sister, Miriam, stands watch from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moses.

As a young man, Moses leaves the palace and discovers the hardship of his brethren. He sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and kills the Egyptian. The next day he sees two Jews fighting; when he admonishes them, they reveal his deed of the previous day, and Moses is forced to flee to Midian. There he rescues Jethro's daughters, marries one of them (Tziporah), and becomes a shepherd of his father-in-law's flocks.

(continued next column)

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G-d said "Enough!" but Moses was not silenced. For Moses' challenge of the divine plan did not end with his passing from physical life. The Zohar tells us that every Jewish soul has at its core a spark of Moses' soul. So every Jew who storms the gates of heaven clamoring for redemption continues Moses' struggle against the decree of galut.

-- The Rebbe

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai, and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." Moses' brother, Aaron, is appointed to serve as his spokesman. In Egypt, Moses and Aaron assemble the elders of Israel to tell them that the time of their redemption has come. The people believe; but Pharaoh refuses to let them go, and even intensifies the suffering of Israel.

Moses returns to G-d to protest: "Why have You done evil to this people?" G-d promises that the redemption is close at hand. ❖

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Jan 13 / Teves 20

Candle Lighting 4:33 pm

Mincha 4:35 pm

Shabbos Day – Jan 14 / Teves 21

Shacharis 9:30 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:30 am

Kiddush..... 12:00 pm

Mincha 4:35 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 4:55 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 5:36 pm

*Latest morning Shema is now **9:40 AM**. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs)..... 1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

Bulletin

*This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
The Berman Law Office .*



**Join us each
weekday morning
Mon-Fri as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am,
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

**Thank You to:
The Baal Korei, and
The Security Volunteers**

Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Jan 14, 2023

Eastern Standard Time

Earliest Tallis 6:18 AM

Latest Morning Shema..... 9:40 AM

Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:30 PM

Plag Hamincha..... 3:56 PM

Earliest Evening Shema.... 5:23 PM

Chassidic Masters

The Brick Factory

*Based on the teachings
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

As the Torah tells the tale, the children of Israel, before they could become a people chosen by G-d as His “light unto the nations,” had to first undergo the “smelting pit of Egypt.” For 210 years they were “strangers in a land that is not theirs,” during the last 86 of which they were inducted into forced labor by the Egyptians, primarily in the manufacture of bricks.

Why bricks? Nothing is incidental in G-d’s world, particularly in the history of His people. If we were forged as a nation at the brick kilns of Egypt, then the brick is significant to our mission in life.

Stones and Bricks

The human being is a builder. Some of us build physical structures—homes, cities, roads, high- or low-tech machines, and a host of other useful (or useless) objects. Others engage in more metaphysical construction, structuring words, pigments or sounds so that they house ideas or feelings. And we all build a life, forging materials from our environment, our society and our own psyche into an edifice that serves a certain function and aim.

Endowed by our Creator with free choice, we might make this a material or spiritual aim, a selfish or altruistic one, a positive or negative one; or we can make it the ultimate aim of building what the Midrash calls “a dwelling for G-d”

by devoting our life to the fulfillment of G-d’s will as revealed in the Torah.

The materials we use fall under two general categories: G-d-given and manmade. Many of the “materials” out of which we build our lives were already here when we arrived on the scene, ready for use, or with their potential implicit in it, awaiting discovery and realization. But G-d empowered us to do more than simply develop His world. Desiring that we become His “partners in creation” (as the Talmud expresses it), He imparted to us the ability to create potential where no such potential exists.

Therein lies the deeper significance of the bricks we molded and fired as we matured as a people.

The book of Genesis (in chapter 11) describes the invention of the brick: Originally, the survivors of the Flood inhabited mountainous regions, and quarried stone as a building material; but then they settled in the valley of Shinar (later Babylon), where they desired to build “a city, and a tower whose head reached to the heavens.” Where would they find a material strong enough for such a massive structure? Someone had an idea: “They said one to the other, ‘Let us mold bricks, and bake them with fire.’ And the brick served them as stone, and clay served them as mortar” (Genesis 11:3).

The “stone” represents those materials which G-d provides us to build our lives. Not that man needn’t toil; the stone must be hewn from the mountain, transported, cut into shape, and fitted with many others for a structure to be raised.

But the stone is there, solid and fit for the task, awaiting development. In our personal lives, this represents those elements that are naturally qualified to serve as part of a “home for G-d” and readily lend themselves to this end: our positive character traits, the sacred times and places in creation (e.g., the 24 hours of Shabbat, the Holy Land), objects and forces designated for the performance of a mitzvah (e.g. a Torah scroll, a pair of tefillin).

Then there are those elements that are as qualified a building material as raw clay: our selfish and animalistic instincts, and a material world that obscures the truth of its Creator. Elements that by nature are inconducive, or even contrary, to anything good and G-dly. To include these elements in the dwelling for G-d we make of our lives, we must forge bricks: knead and mold them into a shape they have never known, and fire them in the kiln of self-sacrifice and love of G-d, until they become as solid and supportive as the sacred stones in our edifice. ❖

The Lamb

The Midrash asks: “Why did Moses go to the mountain where he saw the burning bush?” and answers that he was pursuing a runaway lamb. This was not an accidental sequence. G-d was seeking a leader for His people. He wanted someone who would be concerned not only with the collective, but with every individual, one who would care for the people’s personal needs. This lamb led him to the burning bush.

From Our Sages – Shemos

There arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8)

Some say it was actually a new king; others say that it was the same king with new decrees. “Who knew not Joseph”—who acted as if he did not know Joseph (since, in either case, he surely knew about Joseph and his salvation of Egypt).

(Talmud; Rashi)

Let us deal wisely with them (Exodus 1:10)

Pharaoh himself took hold of a basket and shovel; all who saw Pharaoh with a basket and shovel, and working in bricks, did likewise. The Jews came too, and diligently worked with him all day, for they were strong and brawny. When evening fell, Pharaoh placed taskmasters over them, and said: “Count how many bricks they made.” He then said to the Hebrews: “This number you shall deliver to me each and every day,” appointing the Egyptian taskmasters over Hebrew officers, and the Hebrew officers over the people.

(Midrash Tanchuma)

[Pharaoh’s daughter] saw the box among the rushes, and she sent her maid (“ammatah”) to fetch it (Exodus 2:5)

Another interpretation of this verse renders the Hebrew word ammatah as “her arm” rather than “her maid.” Ammatah also means “arm length.” This is to teach us that “her arm was extended for many arm-lengths” (to enable her to reach the basket).

(Talmud; Rashi)

If Moses’ basket lay beyond her reach, why did Pharaoh’s daughter extend her arm? Could she possibly have anticipated the miracle that her hand would be “extended for many arm-lengths”?

There is a profound lesson here for each and every one of us. Often, we are confronted with a situation that is beyond our capacity to rectify. Someone or something is crying out for our help, but there is nothing we can do: by all natural criteria, the matter is simply beyond our reach. So we resign ourselves to inactivity, reasoning that the little we can do won’t change matters anyway.

But Pharaoh’s daughter heard a child’s cry and extended her arm. An unbridgeable distance lay between her and the basket containing the weeping infant, making her action seem utterly pointless. But because she did the maximum of which she was capable, she achieved the impossible. Because she extended her arm, G-d extended its reach, enabling her to save a life and raise the greatest human being ever to walk the face of the earth.

(Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

The angel of G-d appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush (Exodus 3:2)

Why in a thornbush and not some other tree? In order to demonstrate that “I am with them in their affliction.”

(Rashi)

Moses said to G-d: “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh . . . ?” And He said: “. . . This is your sign that I have sent you” (Exodus 3:11–12)

This itself—your humility—is the reason why I have chosen you.

(Maayanah Shel Torah) ❖

Haftorah for Shemos in a nutshell

Isaiah 27:6–28:13; 29:22–23

This week's haftorah parallels the week's Torah reading on many levels. One of the parallels is the message of redemption conveyed by Isaiah—"and you shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel"—that is reminiscent of the message of redemption that G-d spoke to Moses at the burning bush, a message that Moses then communicated to Pharaoh.

The haftorah vacillates between Isaiah's prophecies concerning the future redemption, and his admonitions concerning the Jews' drunken and G-dless behavior. Isaiah starts on a positive note: "In the coming days, Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom, filling the face of the earth . . ." He mentions G-d's mercy for His nation, and the measure-for-measure punishment He meted out upon the Egyptians who persecuted them. And regarding the future redemption: "You shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel. And it will come to pass on that day that a great shofar will be sounded, and those lost in the land of Assyria and those exiled in the land of Egypt will come, and they will prostrate themselves before the L-rd on the holy mount in Jerusalem."

The prophet then proceeds to berate the drunkenness of the Ten Tribes, warning them of the punishment that awaits them. "With the feet they shall be trampled, the crown of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim . . ."

The haftorah ends on a positive note: "Now Jacob will no longer be ashamed, and now his face will not pale. For when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, who shall sanctify My name . . . and the G-d of Israel they will revere." ❖



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Good Shabbos to all!