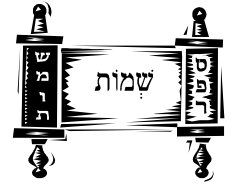




KINDER TORAH®

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Shemos



Does It Bother You?

Paraoh wanted to destroy the Jewish people. He ordered the Jewish midwives to kill the newborn sons, and allow the daughters to live. "But the midwives feared Hashem, they did not do as they were commanded, and they allowed the boys to live." "Hashem was good to the midwives. The people increased and became very strong. Because the midwives feared Hashem, He made houses for them." (Bereshis 1:17-21). These midwives were Yocheved, the mother of Moshe and Aharon, and Miriam, Yocheved's daughter. The "houses" that Hashem rewarded them with were the royal families that descended from them. The priestly families of *Kehuna* and *Levi* were offspring of Yocheved. The kingship descended from Miriam.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l points out that some mitzvos are more difficult to perform than others. If we are not able to perform a difficult mitzvah due to circumstances beyond our control, do we feel badly? Perhaps not. We may even be relieved. Not so with the midwives. Allowing a boy to live was a violation of the king's decree. Even so, their only desire was that the Jewish people increase and grow strong. They wanted to see every child live. Therefore, the verse inserts, "the people increased and became very strong." If a child died from a sickness that was beyond their control, they would not have to violate the king's decree. Would they have felt relieved? Quite the opposite! They would have felt tremendous pain had a child died. Therefore the verse writes, "the midwives feared Hashem." They wanted to do His mitzvos even when they were not obligated. For this, Hashem rewarded them with royal descendants.

Kinderlach . . .

"Imma, I'm not feeling well. I don't think that I can make it to school."
"Okay, Chaim, you can stay home today." How should Chaim react to a day home from school? Should he be happy that he is able to relax? He does not have to work so hard at learning today. Or, should he feel badly that he does not have to opportunity to learn today. Learning is not always easy, but it is a great mitzvah. Oy, do I feel sad when I am not able to do this mitzvah.

No Minyan

The Jewish people suffered terrible oppression in Egypt. One day, Moshe Rabbeinu saw an Egyptian striking a Jew. He killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. The next day he saw two Jewish men fighting. "He said to the wicked one, 'Why will you strike your fellow (Jew)?'" (Bereshis 2:13). Rashi comments that he only raised his hand to hit the other man. Even so, he is still called wicked.

There is a story about Reb Yitzchak Meir Altar, the "Chiddushei HaRim". He asked a student of his to gather ten men to form a minyan for *shacharis* (morning prayers) on the yahrtzeit of his mother. The student assembled ten talmidei chachomim and sent them to the home of Reb Yitzchak Meir. An eleventh man overheard that they were going to pray at the home of the Rebbe, and he wanted to join the minyan. The student turned to him and said, "The Rebbe asked for only ten men." The man refused to listen. He began pushing his way into the home of the Rebbe. At this point the student lost his patience and slapped the man. He was so humiliated that he left the Rebbe's home. Later that day, the Rebbe asked the student to gather a minyan for *mincha* (afternoon prayers). The young man collected nine men, and together with them entered the Rebbe's home. The Rebbe took note of the number of men and said to the student, "It seems to me that we do not yet have a minyan." "We have a minyan," answered the student. "Do you count yourself in the minyan?" asked the Rebbe? "Yes," answered the student. "How can you count yourself in the minyan? This morning you raised your hand against a fellow Jew."

Kinderlach . . .

Hitting someone is a very serious sin. It is part of the confession that we say on Yom Kippur. "Rashanu" means that we have committed those type of sins give us the label of reshoyim (wicked people). One of those sins is hitting someone. Kinderlach, do you remember how you cried on Yom Kippur? Weren't you sorry about the mistakes that you made the past year? You surely do not want to repeat them. Kinderlach, sometimes we get frustrated like the young man in the

story. Or, sometimes someone hits us or makes fun of us. We may want to hit the other person. Instead of doing that, take a break and go into the other room. Think it over carefully. You may feel justified in hitting him. However, just remember that someone who hits is called a rosho. Is it really worth it?

Shovavim

These weeks during which we read the first eight parshios of Sefer Shemos are referred to as "Shovavim". The word is an anagram of the first letters of the parshios. These are the weeks that the Jewish people went down to Egypt and were redeemed from slavery. The Meam Loaz explains that one of the reasons for the enslavement was purification. They hard labor was a purification process for certain sins. These weeks are an opportunity for us also. If we engage in teshuva, strengthen our learning, and our prayer, we can also purify ourselves.

Kinderlach . . .

We receive special siyata dishmaya (Heavenly assistance) during these weeks. Do you remember how we worked so hard in Elul and Tishrei? We have a new opportunity now for teshuva. Let us all try to strengthen our learning, pray more slowly and with more kavannah (concentration). Look for opportunities to do chessed (acts of kindness) for people. With Hashem's help, we can reach new heights during these weeks.

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