

Psychologist Eric Schumacher stated, "It is a grave error to accuse a man who pursues self-knowledge of "turning his back on society". The opposite would be more nearly true: that a man that fails to pursue self-knowledge is and remains a danger to society, for he will tend to misunderstand everything that other people say or do, and remain blissfully unaware of many of the significance of the things he does himself."

I remember many decades ago watching an episode on "Candid Camera" where high school students were being given in private consultations the results of their aptitude tests. Each one sat uneasily as the news that would determine the direction of their whole life was read to him with total sobriety, "We have been studying your test results and we find that you have the qualifications to be a shepherd!" The existential nausea, anxiety, despair and forlornness that danced across their vulnerable little faces were tragic and comical. They whispered with looks of disbelief, "A Shepherd!? A Shepherd?!" You could see worlds of hopeful imaginations crashing down around them.

What's so wrong with being a shepherd? Some of our greatest people toiled in this field and they were able to pro-

duce themselves by working dutifully and diligently inwardly and out!

Surely, every job has its occupational hazards and it matters probably less which exact career one toils at. More importantly, we espy Moshe at work with great personal honesty, uncluttered by little lies, conscience free. Simultaneously, he fulfills his truest ambition; to quiet the noise of the world around him sufficiently to allow his spirit to soar to the heights it did.

In a world that is dumping new mountains of information on us daily and our little brain sensors are being bombarded constantly with varying stimulation, I wonder seriously if there might be a better way to make real personal progress. Rather than following frantically the beat on the street, what if, by answering the inner talent search, we were to lead a life that allows pauses long and deep enough to hear the bleat of the sheep. (As King Solomon said, "The righteous knows the soul of his beast"- Mishle')

You never know where we might end up or who we might be!

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Shemot 5769 - שמות תשס"ט

מס' ר"ק

"ויפן כה וכה וירא כי אין איש ויך את-המצרי ויתמנהו בחול"
"He turned this way and that and saw that there was no man, so he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand." (Shemos 2:12)

On this פסוק, Rashi makes two comments:
"ויפן כה וכה" – "{Moshe} saw what {the Egyptian} had done to {the Hebrew} in the house and what he had done to him in the field. But according to the simple meaning, it is as it sounds."
"וירא כי אין איש" – "That there was no man destined to descend from {the Egyptian} that would convert."

At a glance, this all appears straightforward. Rashi's first comment seems to present to us the evidence that Moshe Rabeinu used in deciding whether or not to kill the Egyptian for his actions towards the Jewish slave, or according to the simple explanation of the פסוק, that he had already decided to kill him and was now looking around for other Egyptians. In his second comment, Rashi brings another consideration that Moshe analysed in his decision to kill the Egyptian – if he would have any descendants that would convert to Judaism in the future.

However, this second comment does not seem to fit. If Moshe was still judging whether or not to kill the Egyptian, as in the first part of the first comment, then since when is the conversion to Judaism of future generations a consideration? In the case of a Jewish person that might **מבטם ושלום** put to death, the fact that he could have children who would definitely be Jewish is obviously not a saving grace for the defendant, so surely here it also should

not be? Furthermore, if Moshe had already decided to kill the Egyptian and was looking around for other Egyptians, as stated in the second part of the first comment, then for the same reason why consider it? It would surely not have crossed Moshe Rabeinu's mind in his decision to kill the Egyptian in the first place and now that he had decided to kill him, why would he think this now?

A possible solution for this is to look at the circumstances in which this event took place. What was Moshe Rabeinu doing? He was going to kill the Egyptian to protect a fellow Jew, he was not presiding as a judge in a courtroom and he was not doing it on the basis of the testimony of witnesses.

Bearing this in mind, Rashi is telling us something different. In the first part of his first comment, Rashi is informing us of the *background* to Moshe's decision-making process and in the second part he informs us that Moshe Rabeinu had reached the stage where he was *prepared* to kill the Egyptian. Rashi is not listing the actual considerations of whether or not to kill the Egyptian in this comment at all. Rather, in his *second* comment Rashi tells us the condition that Moshe Rabeinu addressed, the only condition applicable – that if he was killing the Egyptian to save a Jew, not in the capacity of a Beis Din but as a fellow Jew, then he had to check if in doing so he would be preventing another Jew being born! If he would be, then since the Jew's life itself was not in danger, maybe killing the Egyptian was not what he would have decided to do. Now the two comments fit together and Rashi has helped us to clearly understand, and learn from, this episode.

By Yehoshua Lefkowitz

Times for Shabbos - זמני שבת

In: 4:07

Out: 5:15

The Jewish Threat

And behold the nation of the children of Israel are more and greater than us (1:9)

When one looks at Pharaoh's complaint against the Bnei Yisroel it seems perfectly rational. During the years of famine, all of the residents of Egypt were forced into selling their land and labour to the Egyptian authorities. Rashi tells us that Yoseph moved them from one city to another to make them feel like strangers in their own land. The whole of Egypt was thus in massive upheaval and amongst this turmoil, a tiny nation not governed by the famine-imposed rules of the land was allowed to settle in one place, multiply beyond control and start to infringe upon Egyptian society.

Any ruler would consider such a people to be a threat to national security. So why is it that we see Pharaoh as a rasha? He was only doing what any responsible ruler would have had done.

The *Emes Le'Ya'akov* explains that Pharaoh should have had been grateful to the Jews. Without the influence of Yoseph where would Egypt have been? A nation starving to death due to famine. Under the guidance of Yoseph, Egypt has become the richest, most powerful nation on the face of the earth. Yoseph should have been a national hero for generations to come. So surely his family deserved a bit of gratitude. Pharaoh refused to recognise the debt that he owed to Yoseph and the Jewish people as a whole.

The Midrash tells us that Pharaoh had three advisors, Bila'am, Iyov and Yisro. Bila'am agreed with Pharaoh that he owed the Jews nothing. Iyov was silent because even though he agreed in principle that the Jews deserved honour but he lacked

the zeal to contradict Pharaoh. Yisro on the other hand, greatly appreciated the importance of showing *Hakaras Ha'tov*, therefore he ran away to Midyan.

Yisro's attitude towards gratitude can also be seen later on in this week's Parasha. Yisro's daughters come home one day and relay what had happened to them at the well, how an Egyptian man had helped them out. Yisro immediately tells his daughters to call this man so he should not only partake of their hospitality but also so that he could marry one of the daughters.

The second part of Yisro's request seems strange. How did he know that a man whom he had never met before is a fitting husband for his daughters?

The *Emes Le'Ya'akov* brings a Midrash to help us understand this. The Midrash tells us that at the well the daughters of Yisro thanked Moshe for all he had done. Moshe responded, "Don't thank me, thank the Egyptian who I killed and therefore had to flee." Moshe gave thanks to a rasha who he had to kill as a "roideif" for causing him to run away. This is also hinted to when the daughters say, "An Egyptian man saved us", that the Egyptian they were referring to was not Moshe rather the Egyptian taskmaster who Moshe killed. When Yisro saw that Moshe had such a great mida of *Hakaras Ha'tov* he knew he was the perfect son in law.

By Aharon Goldwater

Candy Game

Menashe and Ephraim are playing a fun and delicious game. Before them are two bags of candy; one is filled with 32 candies and the other with 51.

The rules of the game involve taking turns removing up to 25 candies from either one of the bags.

Whoever takes the last candy wins!

Assuming that Menashe is the first player, how many candies must he pick out to ensure that he wins?

Answer— he takes 19 candies from bag one. He then replicates whatever Ephraim does and will therefore take the finale candy.

Who We Might Be!

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto writes in his Etz Chaim, "A person should ask himself what our forefathers did that caused Hashem to choose them." What did Moshe and David do? He should answer and then say, "It would be well for every person to do the same."

Moshe's actions immediately prior to the burning bush are described as follows, "And Moshe was shepherding the sheep of Yisro, his father in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the sheep after the desert and he came to the mountain of G-d, Choreb." (Shemos 3:1) Then, suddenly, the burning bush appears, and the task to save a nation.

Why did he lead his sheep to the desert? Moshe, Rashi, tells was distancing himself from theft by avoiding fields that might potentially belong to others.

As King David tells us, "Who will ascend the mountain of G-d, and who can stand in that holy place, someone who has clean hands and a pure heart..."

What else was Moshe doing at that time? The Netziv asks why Moshe led the sheep "after the dessert" and not simply to the dessert which would have been sufficient.

He answers that Moshe went deep into the dessert to isolate himself and search for G-d. How does isolating oneself lead to discovering Hashem?

The Chazon Ish writes, "When a person with a sensitive soul finds some quiet time to meditate on existence, away from the pulls of desire, astonishment over takes him. The sight of the heavens above and the earth below fills him with emotion and wonder. The world suddenly strikes him as a mystery, a marvelous enigma... and the desire to fathom this mystery consumes his soul. He is willing to brave fire and water to gain understanding. He wonders: 'What is the point of this life, however pleasant it may be, if its purpose eludes him?'"

Vaclav Havel, the former Czechoslovakian president and poet wrote, "We may know immeasurably more about the universe than our ancestors did, and yet it increasingly seems that they knew something more essential about it than we do, something that escapes us."

(continued overleaf)

Riddle of the Week

By saying guilty, the man on trial goes free, but by saying innocent, he is punished. What is the case?
(answer in next issue)

Answer to Last Week's Riddle

Where in davening do we say two words 44 times?

Answer: The Avinu Malkeinus.

Prizes have been sponsored by various local Jewish shops to be raffled off monthly to those who successfully answer the weekly general knowledge question!!! Everyone is welcome to submit an answer by emailing us at LIVINGTORAH@HASMONEAN.CO.UK