

Zalman to the anonymous chassid rings true: *You speak about what you need, but say nothing of what you are needed for!*

Often, the best response to adversity is to break out of our comfort zones and extend a helping hand to another person with love and gratitude for all the good that we have.

## The Donkey in the Pit

*A Parable on Pain and Gain*  
By Rabbi Yaakov Lieder

Once, when one of my daughters was eleven years old, she complained about a pain in her knee. Seeing nothing wrong with her knee, I suggested that it was probably growing pains. My daughter didn't like the explanation. "Why can't we grow without pain?" she demanded.

Unfortunately, in real life, growth is often associated with pain. As the famous saying goes, "No pain -- no gain." While we may not have control over the "pain" part, especially when it's caused by others, we do most definitely have control over the "gain" part.

Most of our learning and growth in life comes not from the good times but rather from the difficult times. During the good period we are happy and therefore do not want anything to change. It is during the bad times, when we are unhappy with the status quo, that we learn how to change things -- how to make our world better than it is.

When life throws challenges at us, we have a choice. We can feel sorry for ourselves and cry and complain, "Why me?" Or we could stop and say to ourselves: "What can I do, given the new circumstances that have arisen?"

I once asked an elderly wise person whom I used to approach for advice, "Where do you get such good judgement from?" He answered, "Good judgment comes from bad experience." He related to me the following story, which had a profound effect on me.

One day, a donkey fell into a pit. The animal cried and whined for hours while his owner tried to figure out what to do. Finally, the farmer decided that since the animal was old, and the pit needed to be covered up anyway, he'd just bury the old donkey right there. He got a shovel and started filling in the pit. The donkey kept up its

wailing, but then fell silent. After an hour of furious shovelling, the farmer paused to rest. To his amazement, he saw his old donkey jump out of the pit and trot away!

At first, when the donkey realized what was happening, he cried even more piteously. But then the wise animal hit on a plan. As each spadeful of dirt hit his back, the donkey would shake it off and take a step up on the growing mound of earth. Eventually, the mound grew high enough for him to jump out of the pit.

Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the pit well is to shake it off and take a step up. We can get out of the deepest pits by not stopping and never giving up. Just shake it off and take a step up.

Try it, it works!

## Live & Laugh

An elderly Floridian called 911 on her cell to report that her car had been broken into. She is hysterical as she explains her situation to the dispatcher: "They've stolen the stereo, the steering wheel, the brake pedal and even the accelerator!" The dispatcher said, "Stay calm. An officer is on the way." A few minutes later, the officer radios in. "Disregard," he says. "She got in the back seat by mistake."

## Calendar

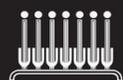
- ◆ Shacharis: 8:45 am (one minyan)
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ **Shiur by Rabbi Goldman**
- ◆ Mincha: 6:30 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 7:39 pm

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell** & available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows**.
- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
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# Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

Published by the  
Sydenham Highlands North  
Hebrew Congregation  
Johannesburg, South Africa



6 Jan 2018 Parshas Shemos 19 Teves 5778

## I Shall Be

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

In this week's Torah reading, Moses makes his dramatic appearance on the Biblical scene. He tries to stop the persecution of his brethren, receives a death sentence for his troubles, and is forced to flee to Midian where he marries Zipporah and tends the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro. Then, at the burning bush, comes his first divine revelation.

G-d calls upon the shepherd to go back to Egypt and redeem his people. The mission is nothing less than to face up to the Pharaoh himself and deliver the L-rd's famous stirring message: *Let My People Go!*

In characteristic humility, Moses is a most reluctant leader. He seems to be looking for all sorts of reasons as to why he is unworthy of the task. At one point, he asks the Almighty, "Who shall I say sent me? What is Your name?"

Now we are familiar with many names that G-d goes by, but the one G-d now gives Moses is puzzling and enigmatic, mysterious and mystical "*I shall be as I shall be.*" Strange name for a Supreme Being.

Many commentaries expound on the possible interpretations of this most unusual name. Here is one very powerful explanation.

The significance of this name is that it is posed in the future tense. "*I shall be as I shall be.*" Moses was asking the ultimate existential question. How do I call You, G-d? "What is Your name," means how are You to be identified, known, understood? How can finite, mortal man come to know the Infinite Being?

And G-d's answer is, "I shall be as I shall be" -- future tense. You want to know me, Moses? I'm afraid you'll have to wait. We cannot necessarily understand G-d by what has happened in the past. Nor, even, in the present. In the here and now, when we stare life and its ambiguities in the face, we experience tremendous difficulty in our vain attempts to grasp the Almighty's vision or perceive His vast eternal plan.

To truly understand the Infinite G-d takes infinite patience. One day, somewhere down the line, in the future, He will make Himself known to us. Only then will we come to really know Him and His inscrutable ways. "*I shall be as I shall be.*"

Don't we all ask Moses' question at times? Why is there tragedy in the world? Why is there so much human suffering, pain and agony, so much *tzor* to contend with? How many families have been torn apart literally and figuratively in the wars and terror in Israel? How many individuals do we each know in our own communities who have experienced tragedy in their lives? Why, we cry, why?

So we are told that right at the very beginning of Jewish history, the very first time G-d spoke to Moses He said to him up front, "I know you want to be able to understand Me and My ways; but please accept that it is impossible -- for now." *I shall be as I shall be.* One day, you will be able to know Me. Not today or tomorrow, but one day in the future everything will make sense and everything will be understood.

Ultimately, in time, all will be known.

In the meanwhile, we live with faith, trust, hope,

and a great deal of patience as we see destiny unfolding and we aren't quite sure what to make of it. And we look forward with eager anticipation to that awesome day when the Almighty's great name will be known and understood, and we will see with our own eyes of flesh that G-d is good and His ways are just. May it be speedily in our day.

## Parsha Pointers

*Shemos: Artscroll Chumash pg 292;  
Living Torah pg 259*

This week's portion tells a story often repeated throughout history: The Jews become prominent and numerous. There arises a new king in Egypt "who did not know Joseph" (meaning he chose not to know Joseph or recognize any debt of gratitude). He proclaims slavery for the Jewish people "lest they may increase so much, that if there is war, they will join our enemies and fight against us, driving (us) from the land."

Moshe (Moses) is born and immediately hidden because of the decree to kill all male Jewish babies. Moses is saved by Pharaoh's daughter, grows up in the royal household, goes out to see the plight of his fellow Jews. He kills an Egyptian who was beating a Jew, escapes to Midian when the deed becomes known, becomes a shepherd, and then is commanded by God at the Burning Bush to "bring My people out of Egypt." Moses returns to Egypt, confronts Pharaoh who refuses to give permission for the Israelites to leave. And then God says, "Now you will begin to see what I will do to Pharaoh!"

## The Test of Leadership

*By Rabbi Zalman Posner*

Moses is instructed by G-d to demand that Pharaoh release the Israelites from bondage. Moses is reluctant to assume the responsibility of being Israel's leader, and in humility asks, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and to take Israel

out of Egypt?" G-d assures him, "I will be with you, and this is the sign that I sent you — when you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain" (Exodus 3:12).

In the cacophony of strident voices claiming to express the Divine will, each insisting it is the real standard-bearer of Judaism, and it alone embodies the essence of our faith, the ordinary Jew may understandably be confused. How can we differentiate religious leadership from misrepresentation of Judaism?

Moses performed mighty deeds in Egypt and afterward — the ten plagues, splitting the Red Sea, giving the people manna in the inhospitable desert, waging a supernatural and successful war with Amalek, etc. The sign G-d gave Moses could have been any of these things, or simply, the very fact that he would accomplish the impossible mission of leading the Exodus should be adequate proof that G-d is with him. But it seems that material success is no sign for a Jewish religious leader that "G-d sent you." Physical freedom, power, and prosperity — these are not indications of strength of the spirit.

Moses knows he is G-d's messenger because he leads the people to serve G-d. He removes the yoke of slavery imposed by Pharaoh to replace it with the self-discipline demanded by Torah. He took Israel away from Pharaoh, and brought them near to G-d. He proved himself a religious leader because his followers served G-d better than they did without him. The leader who strengthens devotion to Torah and its teachings, who brings Judaism deeper into the lives of his people, he speaks with the voice of Judaism.

## Freud's Great Freudian Slip

*By Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks*

It was Freud's greatest Freudian slip, and for some reason his commentators, at least those I've read, haven't noticed it.

It appears in his last book, *Moses and Monotheism*, a strange work if ever there was one. It was published in 1939, by which time Freud had taken refuge in Britain. Had he stayed in Vienna, heaven knows what humiliations he would have suffered before being murdered along with his fellow Jews. For some reason, at this desperate time, Freud wrote a book (he originally described it as a

"historical novel") in which he tried to prove that Moses was an Egyptian. There have been many speculations as to why he wrote it, and I have no wish to add to their number. Early on in the book, though, there is a most curious episode.

Freud notes that several scholars have identified a common theme in stories about the childhood of heroes. The hero's birth is fraught with danger. As a baby, he is exposed to the elements in a way that would normally lead to death — sometimes by being placed in a box and thrown into the water. The child is rescued and brought up by adoptive parents. Eventually, he discovers his true identity. It is a story told about Sargon, Gilgamesh, Oedipus, Romulus and many others. It is also the story of Moses.

At this point, however, Freud notes that in one respect the story of Moses isn't like the others at all. In fact, it's the opposite. In the conventional story, the hero's adoptive parents are humble, ordinary people. Eventually he discovers that he is actually of royal blood, a prince. In the Moses story, the reverse is the case. It is his adoptive family that is royal. He is brought up by the daughter of Pharaoh. His true identity, he discovers, is that he belongs, by birth, to a nation of slaves.

Freud saw this and then failed to see what it meant. Instead he changed tack and concluded that the story is a fabrication designed to conceal the fact that Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he really was a prince of Egypt. What Freud failed to realize is that the story of Moses is not a myth but an anti-myth. It takes a myth and turns it upside down.

Its message is simple and revolutionary. True royalty — the Bible suggests — is the opposite of our conventional wisdom. It isn't privilege and wealth, splendor and palaces. It's moral courage. Moses, in discovering that he is the child of slaves, finds greatness. It's not power that matters, but the fight for justice and freedom. Had Moses been an Egyptian prince, he would have been eminently forgettable. Only by being true to his people and to G-d did he become a hero.

Freud had mixed feelings about his own identity. He admired Jews but was tone-deaf to the music of Judaism. That is why, I suspect, he failed to see that he had come face to face with one of the most powerful moral truths the Bible ever taught. Those

whom the world despises, G-d loves. A child of slaves can be greater than a prince. G-d's standards are not power and privilege. They are about recognizing G-d's image in the weak, the powerless, the afflicted, the suffering, and fighting for their cause. What a message of courage Freud might have sent his people in that dark night! Let us at least see what he did not, that the story of Moses is one of the great narratives of hope in the literature of mankind.

## What Are You Needed For?

*By Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer*

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi had a disciple who was also a great philanthropist. Two causes that were particularly dear to him were supporting the Jewish community in the Land of Israel and ransoming captives.

This wealthy chassid had already married off his children and begun pledging dowries for his less-affluent relatives, when the wheel of fortune turned, and his finances suffered.

He was forced to borrow money, and at the end he was left penniless. Overwhelmed and pursued by creditors, he did what any chassid would do: he traveled to his rebbe and unburdened his heavy heart.

After listening intently to his complaints, Rabbi Schneur Zalman addressed him: "You speak about what you need, but say nothing of what you are needed for!"

In this week's Torah portion, the first one of the book of Exodus, we read about the beginning of the harsh Egyptian exile. But with the disease comes the cure: in the same portion we read about the birth of Moses, the man who was to lead the Jewish people out of their bondage.

One of the first things we hear about Moses is that how he helps another person. Emerging from a sheltered existence as a member of Pharaoh's household, he sees an Israelite slave being cruelly beaten by an Egyptian, and rescues him.

There are times in our lives when it may be challenging to think about anyone other than ourselves, but the message of Rabbi Schneur

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