

LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5784 PARSHAS SHEMOS

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

A famous question is raised from the very first time we meet Moshe Rabbeinu. Why didn't the Torah mention the names of his parents, Amram and Yocheved? After all, Amram was the gadol hador and Yocheved was an incredible tzadekes; there was surely to be ashamed of. A number of answers have been given over the centuries. First of all, since we know that Moshe Rabbeinu lived through many miracles (see Kuzari Maamar 1) such as not eating for 40 days when he was receiving the Torah, his face shining with an other-worldly glow etc. Therefore, the Torah stresses to us (Kehillas Yitzchok) that he had regular parents ("a man and a woman"). On the other hand, the Shaarei Orah suggests that if the Torah had immediately told us that Moshe Rabbeinu's parents were such great tzadikim, we might have thought that only such parents can produce a Moshe Rabbeinu. The Torah therefore calls them simply a man and a woman to inform us that if we daven properly and make sure that our homes are full of kedushah, we, too, can produce a Moshe Rabbeinu.

This discussion is reminiscent of the famous vort of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l. He quotes the Halacha in Shulchan Aruch that a Jewish child should not be nursed by a gentile. Rav Yaakov asks that the Torah states specifically that the reason that Moshe Rabbeinu was not allowed to nurse from a gentile was that he was destined to speak to the Shechinah. How does this apply to every child? He answers that indeed every Jewish child should be raised to be as holy and pure as Moshe Rabbeinu because he could end up speaking to the Shechinah. We might add that this applies to a girl as well, since there were seven nevi'os, female prophets, who did in fact speak to Hashem.

A Rov in Eretz Yisrael, Rav Meir Tzimrut, made an interesting analogy from the marriage of Amram and Yocheved to many recent marriages during Covid. Paroh had made a decree that all boys who are born must be thrown into the sea to drown. Miriam convinced Amram to remarry Yocheved because his decision to get divorced was worse than Paroh's decree, since it didn't allow any babies to be born. After Amram and Yocheved remarried, many other couples who had gotten divorced followed suit and remarried. However, they did so in private, so that Paroh's henchmen could not stop them. This was similar to the Covid weddings which were often conducted behind closed doors and secretly, like many in the former Soviet Union.

It has always been so for Klal Yisrael. The world did not want us to multiply and grow but we did so under the most dire of circumstances. This is a tremendous tribute to Klal Yisrael and our commitment to create new generations even against the will of our enemies. This, too, is an answer as to why Amram and Yocheved are not mentioned as Moshe Rabbeinu's parents. It is to teach us that every father and mother in Klal Yisrael is precious and equally important to Hashem and Klal Yisrael. We have no caste system or hierarchy. Every single soul is important and should be treated as if he or she is the next leader in Klal Yisrael.

One proof to all this is the amazing current religious awakening in Klal Yisrael. People in general and soldiers of the IDF in particular are running to Shuls and Botei Medrash to learn Torah, do mitzvos and return to Hashem. This is reflected in Moshe Rabbeinu being raised in Paroh's palace and became the greatest of the Nevi'im and the one who took us out of Mitzrayim and gave us the Torah. It is a reminder that Hashem can and does bring light out of darkness and kedushah and taharah from tumah and evil. The maaseh avos here seems to be that we should never despair of finding Torah and Torah leaders in our midst. May we indeed soon see the geulah sheleimah bimeheirah b'yameinu with the return of all our lost brethren wherever they are.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A GUTTEN CHODESH

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5784 PARSHAS SHEMOS
MEVORCHIM CHODESH SHEVAT (ROSH CHODESH THURSDAY)
BY HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

This week we will continue questions and answers about traveling especially with a Sefer Torah:

Question: Regarding the upcoming mid-winter vacations and with an eye toward Pesach ahead, may we transport a Sefer Torah to our destination and what are the guidelines?

Answer: Many people assume that there is no problem bringing a Sefer Torah to where it will be needed, since a number of mitzvos will be accomplished. However, this is not necessarily the case. The Mordechai (Rosh Hashanah 710; Shulchan Aruch 15:14; 584:3) rules that one may not transport a Sefer Torah to someone in jail even to be read on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Some Poskim (see Mishnah Berurah and Aruch Hashulchan there) hold that this prohibition applies to all similar situations, such as someone in the hospital etc. However, there is an exception to this rule. The Rama (135:14) states that it is permissible for an *adam choshuv* – an important person. Some Poskim (Darchei Moshe 135:10; Mogen Avrohom 23) hold that even this is only permissible if the important person is ill. Other Poskim (Aruch Hashulchan 30; Mateh Efraim 584:24) hold that we may move the Sefer Torah for an adam choshuv even if he is not ill. The definition of an important person for this Halacha is either a talmid chochom (Mishnah Berurah 50) or someone who never misses a regular Torah reading (Shaarei Chaim 9:23). The main heter (dispensation) that we rely upon today is that the Sefer Torah will be used for a tzibur (at least ten Jewish men) who are, in effect, the equivalent of an important person (Pri Chodosh 14; Mishnah Berurah 47).

Question: How many times must we read from the Sefer Torah which was transported? I have heard that there is a minimum of three times.

Answer: This opinion is actually found in the Aruch Hashulchan (135:32) but it is written as a strict limitation that one should not transport a Sefer Torah for less than three lainings (readings) even for a minyan of ten men. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (quoted in Sefer Hatefilah B'tzibur, page 133) rules that we are not obligated to read three times but, if possible that is desirable. In Any case, a respectable place should be designated for the Sefer Torah in advance, preferable a befitting Aron Kodesh. If one is not available, the Torah may be wrapped in a talis (see Sefer Tzedakah Vachessed 16).

Question: Do these Halachos also apply to a privately owned Sefer Torah?

Answer: Many Poskim (Tzitz Eliezer 18:6) hold that all the above Halachos do not apply to a privately owned Sefer Torah, which is another heter which is generally used today, to bring a Sefer Torah even for less than three lainings (Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Rov of Yerushalayim, Har Tzvi Orach Chaim 71). Some Poskim however hold that if the Sefer Torah is usually kept in a Shul Aron Kodesh the above guidelines apply even if it is privately owned. If one is going to take the Torah regularly (e.g. Every summer; for simchos) one should make a tenai (condition) when donating the Sefer Torah or at the time of the Hachnosas Sefer Torah, that it may transported for the above-stated reasons.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A GUTTEN CHODESH (THURSDAY)