

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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January 20, 2018

Bo

4 Shevat, 5778

Who is Your Moses?

Soon after Pharaoh told the Jewish people that they could leave Egypt, he had a change of heart. He dispatched his army to pursue his former slaves, closing-in from behind. Directly ahead lay the Red Sea.

The Midrash shares that the Jewish people were actually arguing amongst themselves as to what to do. Some said: "Let us throw ourselves into the sea." "Let us return to Egypt." "Let us wage war upon the Egyptians." "Let us pray to G-d."

Moses declares: "Fear not, stand by and see the salvation of G-d which He will show you today; for as you have seen Egypt today, you will never see them again. G-d will fight for you, and you will be silent." (Exodus 14:13)

The Midrash asserts that these words imply Moses's rejection of all four options. Yet, if all the stated opinions were wrong, what was Israel supposed to do during this life threatening crossroads? Moreover, all of the alternatives seem reasonable - solutions that at one time or another in Jewish history, proved effective and even prescribed by G-d.

As well, if different crisis require different reactions, how are we to ever know which response is correct in any given circumstance?

"Speak to the Children of Israel," G-d says to Moses. In response to all their fussing, tell them "that they should go forward," i.e., "Let Me give the orders while you follow and not the other way around."

The multiple voices of the varied camps all committed the same error. Instead of looking to G-d and Moses for direction, they turned to themselves. They never even thought to consider what G-d had to say about all this.

The voyage from Egypt to Sinai is the perpetual voyage from exile to redemption - the ongoing assignment to transform humanity and the very world into a G-dly domain. At the very inception of the journey we are taught a critical lesson. Man, in his service of G-d, must not be driven by his own logic, feelings and motives; he is rather instructed to seek the true will of G-d.

There is G-d's will and then there is ours. While on the surface the two may seem as though they are one, this is usually because we have not yet learned to tell them apart. As we grow in our understanding and service of G-d through Torah, we learn to distinguish and extricate G-d's will from our own.

Now, as then, we are faced with multiple choices at every crossroads in our national and personal journey from Egypt to Sinai and beyond. And now, as then, there are many voices - inner as well as outer - that are eager to share their opinions on when and how we ought to proceed.

The first thing we must know is that not all voices are those of G-d. This is the premier message to the newborn nation of Israel upon the onset of its journey. It is likewise the premier lesson for every Jew in his personal spiritual journey.

But how are we to know which voice is from G-d and which is from elsewhere? This is perhaps the most essential skill taught by Judaism. In fact, much of Chassidic philosophy is designed to help accomplish this very task.

There is one principle however, without which it is virtually impossible to overcome this obstacle: We must recognize and follow the guidance of Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses our teacher). In absence of a Moses there is no Judaism and there is no knowable G-d.

What this means, in more practical terms, is that a Jew cannot go-it-alone. A Jew cannot rely on himself to determine and decipher the credibility of every voice - he cannot trust himself to navigate every fork in the road. This is precisely what our Sages meant when they said: "Make for yourself a teacher and free yourself from doubt." Avot 1:16

As Jews we must always remember the lesson from that experience on the banks of the Red Sea. We must look to the Moses in our lives and discern between the voice of G-d and the voices that wish to present themselves as G-d, be it from within or without. Only then can we be certain that our ideas and ideologies are not rooted in one of the four camps which entirely missed the mark, good as their intentions were .

By following the call of the Moses of our generation, his teachings and guidance through which G-d communicates to us, we will be sure not to veer from the Divine intention and path and thereby fulfill our G-dly mission with the coming of the righteous Moshiach.

(by Rabbi Yoseph Kahanov from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Egypt vs. Shabbat

In this week's parashah, Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt. In the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Va'etchanan (Devarim 5: 15) we read, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Hashem, your Elokim, took you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore Hashem, your Elokim, has commanded you to make the Shabbat day." In what way is Shabbat a reminder of the Exodus?

R' Ehud Rakovski-Avitzedek shlita (Yerushalayim) explains: Egyptians believed that the source of all blessings was the Nile, which was in their backyard, and that they needed no connection with an external source of blessing, i.e., with the Creator. Thus, Egypt is the antithesis of Shabbat, which testifies to the existence of a Creator.

He continues: Egyptians were involved with black magic, astrology, and other forces that conceal the identity of the only true power—Hashem. In contrast, when Moshe spoke to Pharaoh, he always referred to G-d by His "proper Name," Y-K-V-K (which we pronounce "Hashem"), not by the Name "Elokim," which refers to G-d as He appears through nature. [But Pharaoh replied (Shmot 5:2), "Who is Hashem that I should heed His voice to send out Israel? I do not know Hashem, nor will I send out Israel!"]

Our Sages refer to Egypt as the "home of slaves." This means, R' Rakovski explains, that the Egyptians themselves were slaves—specifically, slaves to materialism. In contrast, Shabbat is the day of rest from materialism, a day of holiness. (Da'at Shabbat p.306)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



We happily wish Mazel Tov to
Mr. Aaron and Mrs. Laurie Margolies
 on the **Birth of a Grandson**, born to their children
Rachel Margolies and Motti Hoffnung.
 Mazel Tov also to the grandparents
Mr. Jerry and Mrs. Shelly Hoffnung

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Ross A. Jandorf**
 on the loss of his father, **Ross D. Jandorf.**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Kol Hanaarim this Friday evening at 7:45 p.m. in The Shul. Cholent is provided by O'Fishel Catering!

Yahrzeits This Week:

Toby Epstein	4 Shevat - Friday night / Shabbat	for mother	Pesse Rivka bas Yechiel
Liz Mayer	9 Shevat - Wednesday night / Thursday	for father	Yekusiel Shmuel ben Michoel
Larry Ziffer	9 Shevat - Wednesday night / Thursday	for mother	Rochel bas Meir Yehuda Leib HaKohen

Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 1/19 — 3 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 4:54 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:55 p.m.

Shabbat, 1/20 — 4 Shevat

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:48 a.m.
 Berachot Gemora Shiur — 4:10 p.m.
 Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 4:40 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 5:56 p.m.

Sunday, 1/21 — 5 Shevat

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

Monday, 1/22 — 6 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 1/23 — 7 Shevat Tevet

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, 1/24 — 8 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, 1/25 — 9 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Friday, 1/26 — 10 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 5:02 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.