



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH

ISSUE 13

10th January 2015

SHEMOT

19th Teveth 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 1 - 17

- ✚ A new Pharaoh is now in command and fearing that Jewish nation might one day decide to rise up against him; enslaved and set them to work to build two cities for him, Pithom and Ramses.
- ✚ Realising, the more he oppressed them, the more the Jewish population multiplied. Pharaoh sent for two Jewish midwives Shifra and Puah demanding them to kill all the male new-borns they delivered.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 1, verse 18 – Chapter 2, verse 10

- ✚ Shifra and Puah were fearful of Hashem, so they refused to do Pharaoh's bidding. Pharaoh, therefore made a decree that any son that is born will be thrown into the river Nile but the daughters can live.
- ✚ Shifra gives birth to a baby boy and manages to keep it hidden for three months. Afraid of him being found she concealed the child inside a small casket and places it in some reeds along the bank of the river and got the baby's Sister Miriam to keep watch.
- ✚ Pharaoh's daughter, who came down to the river to bathe, happened to find the child and took pity on it. She decides to keep him for herself. She asks Miriam to find someone to nurse the child, so Miriam ran home and fetched her mother. Pharaoh's daughter then named the boy Moshe (Moses) because he was drawn out of the water.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 2, verses 11 - 25

- ✚ Moshe, now grown up, takes a walk and sees an Egyptian beating a Jew. Moshe kills the Egyptian and buries him in the sand. The next day, Moshe tries to break up a fight between two Jews and quickly realises that the Egyptian's murder had become common knowledge, leaving him no choice but to flee to the land of Midian.
- ✚ Moshe assists the daughters of a Midian priest (Yisro), who were being prevented by other shepherds to fetch water from a well to feed their flocks. Moshe takes dwelling in Yisro's home and later marries one of his daughter's (Zipporah). She conceives and gives birth to a son whom they call Gershom.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 3, verses 1 - 15

- ✚ While out one day shepherding Yisro's sheep, Moshe came across a strange sight. A bush was ablaze but none of the branches were being consumed by the flames. Approaching the bush Moshe is halted by Hashem who tells him to remove his shoes as he is standing on sanctified ground.
- ✚ Hashem reveals to Moshe that he has heard the plight of B'nai Yisrael back in Mitzraim and has decided the time has now arrived with Moshe's help, to liberate and deliver them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 3, verse 16 - Chapter 4, verse 17

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe to return back to Mitzraim and convince the Jewish elders to come with him to Pharaoh for permission to leave Mitzraim for three days only, and if he refuses relay the message that Hashem will punish him with many plagues until he concedes.
- ✚ Moshe argues that no-one would ever listen to him, so Hashem shows Moshe two signs that will prove he is Hashem's messenger and tells him that Aron (Aaron) his brother will be Moshe's spoke person.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 4, verses 18 - 31

- ✚ Moshe returns to Yisro, picks up his family and departs back to Mitzraim. On the way Hashem chastises Moshe for not circumcising his son Zipporah gives Gershom a bris and Moshe is saved.
- ✚ After being commanded by Hashem, Aron goes into the desert to greet his brother,

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 5, verse 1 - Chapter 6, verse 1

- ✚ Using the signs that Hashem had given them Aron and Moshe convinced the Jewish people that Hashem will soon release them from his bondage. Moshe and Aron then went to Pharaoh with Hashem's request but Pharaoh refused to listen and in anger, increased the hard labour further to make the Jewish people suffer even more.
- ✚ Moshe and Aron are blamed for their new hardships but Hashem comforts them as they will soon see how Hashem himself will liberate his people and take them out.

Haftarah –

YISHAYAH (ISAIAH) Chapter 27 verse 6 to Chapter 28 verse 13 and Chapter 29, verses 22 & 23

OVERVIEW:

- Due to the Jewish nation's spiritual and moral decline, Yishayah forewarns the people of their eventual destruction beginning, with the exile of the ten tribes of Israel.
- Yishayah reassures them however, that in the end, our essence, the "root" of Yaakov, will survive and flourish, as it had throughout our history.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- This week's Haftarah parallels the week's Torah reading by the message of Redemption conveyed by Yishayah "and you shall be gathered one by one, O children of Israel"
- This is reminiscent of the message of Redemption that Hashem spoke to Moses about at the burning bush; a message that Moshe along with Aron then communicated to Pharaoh

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

This week's Parsha of Shemot quotes the following 'A new King arose over Egypt, who did not know Yosef.' How is it possible that this new Pharaoh who came to power Only one generation after, not be aware of the Man who single handed saved the whole country of Mitzraim from starvation while, at the same time, bringing its entire economy under Pharaoh's control.

There seems to be a mixed bag of opinions given by our great Torah commentators over this verse. Some hold that this Pharaoh was the new heir to the throne, whereas others disagree and believe that as there is no mention of the former Pharaoh's death and this new Pharaoh reigned in his stead, it must mean that it was still the same Pharaoh in charge but his ethos on running the country had changed and everything which Yosef had put into place whilst he was Viceroy had now been disregarded and forgotten. It was new decree's he issued instead which was why the Torah used and emphasised the words 'A New King'

I tend to agree with this opinion more, due to fact, after going back and re-reading the whole story of Yosef there was always some form of animosity against him, mainly due to fact in the eyes of the Egyptians; Yosef was and would always will be a stranger or immigrant who just so happened to become an inclusive member of their society and despite all of his efforts and claims to fame, should still be treated as an outsider.

In other words, hatred was always there just below the surface, and the Egyptians were just biding their time, waiting for the opportunity to arise when Pharaoh would finally erase the memory of the Yosef who saved them from the famine and economic ruin. (Which up till now had kept all Bnai Yisrael safe from any oppression.) And see him and his brethren, as a strong potential threat of overpowering Pharaoh's reign and ruling Mitzraim for themselves.

In the Ten Commandments we find two statements of the commandment concerning Guarding and Remembering the Sabbath Day. While this commandment refers to Shabbat, I think it can be understood with regard to the story of Yosef and the commencement of the Exodus too and how things might have turned out differently; had the next generation not become too complacent and forgetting the fact they were still living in golus (exile) and not really part of the Egyptian society.

With anti-Semitism on the rise once again. The story of the Exodus from Mitzraim is a reminder for every generation especially for all of us, both individually and as a Jewish community as a whole to be on our guard and to remember that we are also living in a time of Golus and that we should also remember that we should all only be living and working here temporarily and that we should not grow distant from our true path, destined to us by Hashem. Preparing the world for the Messianic age when we can all live in the land of Israel in peace.

