



TORAH WEEKLY

23 - 29 December, 2018
15 - 21 Tevet, 5779

Torah:

Exodus 1:1 - 6:1

Haftarah:

Isaiah 27:6 - 28:13;
Isaiah 29:22-23

CALENDARS

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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FROM A PERSON TO A PEOPLE

Sam walks into the bakery on a Friday afternoon and orders two Challahs for Shabbat. The cashier punches in some numbers and then says, "Your total comes to forty five dollars."

Sam is shocked. "Forty five dollars?" he asks in amazement. "Why so expensive?" "Well, it's like this," explains the cashier, "the Challahs are five dollars each, and then thirty five dollars goes to Israel!"

Sam shrugs his shoulders. He certainly wasn't going to refuse a small donation to his homeland. He hands over the forty five dollars and leaves. The following week, Sam again enters the bakery to purchase some cakes for his Shabbat table. "That'll be sixty five dollars," says the cashier. "Sixty five?" Sam croaks. "Well, yes," says the cashier. "Five for each of the three cakes, and fifty dollars for Israel."

A little flustered, Sam shells out sixty five dollars. He consoles himself knowing that the money is going to help his dear Ancestral Homeland. The following week, he again comes to the bakery for some Shavuot cheesecake. He holds his breath as the cashier rings up his purchase. "That'll be one hundred and ten dollars. Ten for the cheesecake and, since the holiday season is particularly difficult for Israel, one hundred for Israel." The cashier smiles sheepishly.

"That's it!" cries Sam, "One hundred dollars is pushing it! Let me speak to your manager immediately!" "No problem, sir." The cashier turns toward the back room and calls out, "Israel! Someone wants to talk to you!..."

So, what really is the difference between "Israel," the individual, and our people as a whole, the nation of Israel? The reality is, less than you might think!

Looking into this week's Torah Reading, we meet a new man. We are introduced to Moses as a grown-up, about to take on the world and get the Exodus thing rolling. Now, we might have expected his introduction to be one of grandeur, perhaps a great public address the Israelites' new leader gave them, or some show of power against the Egyptian leadership. But it was none of that. "... Moses grew up and went out to his brothers and looked at their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers..." He steps in to help his fellow Jew. Thus, Moses makes his entrance onto the big stage.

When Moses takes leave of the city, fleeing the impending punishment meted out to him for his defence of the aforementioned Jewish man, the Torah takes the time to tell us of how Moses stepped in to defend some young shepherdesses from their tormentors at the watering hole.

Later, Moses is out in the wilderness, tending to the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro. A young lamb wanders off, Moses follows, and that's when God presen-

Parshat Shemot

ts Himself in the form of a flaming thornbush.

The common theme between these incidents is the care and concern Moses showed for the individual, for "the little man." God saw every encounter that Moses had with a struggling individual, be it an unfortunate Israeli being beaten down by his cunning Egyptian taskmaster or a single lamb who wandered too far from its herd. In every situation, Moses, much like his forefather, Abraham, showed the genuine concern of a true leader. "It is this very sense of every individual's unique importance that makes this man, Moses, fit to lead my children out of Egypt, out of their house of bondage," said God.

This same stands true for each and every person. We all possess a "spark of Moses," a small dose of those same leadership qualities which made him the man for the job. It is these qualities which have carried our people through thick and thin all throughout the ages.

When each and every one of us has a deep seated awe and respect for not only the resilience of the Jewish nation, but the great passion and burning faith ingrained in the heart and soul of every Jewish individual, there is no power in the world which we cannot overcome.

Remember, the true greatness of the Jewish People is a result of the uniqueness of the Jewish person.

TORAH STUDIES

Aleph offers many Judaic topics for study. Aleph Institute will provide the material and courses. Please write for more information.

MATURITY IN ITS TRUIEST SENSE

The third section of this week's Torah Portion begins, "Now it came to pass in those days that Moses grew up and went out to his brothers and looked at their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers. He turned this way and that way, and he saw that there was no man; so he struck the Egyptian..."

Why does Torah find it meaningful to specify that this took place when "Moses grew up," when, as is well known, Torah doesn't use words needlessly? What lesson can be learned from that?

The nature of man is that the more "grown up" and mature a person gets, the less he focuses on himself and his own needs and begins to make room in his life for others. We see this clearly in the transition from childhood to adulthood, when a child has clearly matured when he stops worrying only about himself and can show genuine concern for others. Their focus goes from, "What do I want, what do I always need?" to being able to put that aside and think about how they can be of service to others.

When a young person feels he or she is ready for the prospect of marriage, in truth what they are saying is "I am ready to have someone else become endlessly important in my life." That's a new level of maturity.

A young couple has matured when they allow the laws of nature to introduce a new member into their eternal bond, thus declaring, "It's no longer about us. We are ready to care for a child, come what may."

Spiritual maturity comes when a person resolves to stop focusing on his or her own needs and put the time and effort into discovering what God needs. "What does God need from me? Why did He put me here? How can I serve Him?"

When it's all about me, existence is a burden. Taking up space is not meaningful. When we put ourselves aside and look around to see how we can be of service to others, it makes us lighter, it takes weight out of our physical existing and puts energy into our lives. Life becomes real.

So, let's all grow up. Let's take the time to check our own maturity when it comes to these matters. How much attention do we really pay to the needs of others? How much do we put our own wants and concerns aside in favor of what's best for other?

And as mature as we've become, we can still do more. Maturity knows no bounds, when it's all about the other.

By Rabbi Nissan Aizek

15 SHEVAT

15 of Shevat (January 21, 2019) is the new year for trees, please make arrangements to purchase dates or figs from the commissary.

PASSOVER

Please begin working with your Rabbi / Chaplain to ensure the paperwork is being processed and the necessary arrangements are being made for Passover.

In Jewish History

Tuesday, 17 Tevet, 5779 - December 25, 2018
1st NY Synagogue (1728)

In 1684, a group of Spanish and Portuguese Jews who fled the Inquisition (see "Today in Jewish History" for Tevet 22) held a Rosh Hashanah service in New Amsterdam, thereby founding congregation Shearith Israel ("Remnant of Israel"). On this 17th of Tevet in 1728, the congregation purchased a lot in Lower Manhattan to erect the first synagogue in New York.

Toldot Aaron (1754)

Rabbi Aaron Zelig ben Joel Feivush of Ostrog, Russia, author of Toldot Aaron, passed away on Tevet 17 of the year in 5515 from creation (1754).

Maggid of Dubna (1841)

Tevet 17 is also the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Yaakov Wolf Krantz (1740-1804), the Maggid (preacher) of Dubna, particularly known for the parables (meshalim) he employed in his sermons and writings.

Wednesday, 18 Tevet, 5779- December 26, 2018
Huna Killed (469)

The Exilarch ("Reish Galuta") of Babylonian Jewry, Huna Mori bar Mar Zutra, was executed in Pumpadita by order of the Persian emperor on the 18th of Tevet of the year 4229 from creation (469 of the common era). Also killed on that day was Rav Mesharshia bar Pekod (the third Jewish leader who was arrested with them, Rav Ameimar bar Mar Yenuka, was executed two months later).

B'nei Yissachar (1841)

The 18th of Tevet the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of Rabbi Zvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dynov (1783?-1841), author of the Chassidic work B'nei Yissachar.

Friday, 20 Tevet, 5779 - December 28, 2018
Passing of Maimonides (1204)

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, Talmudist, Halachist, physician, philosopher and communal leader, known in the Jewish world by the acronym "Rambam" and to the world at large as "Maimonides", passed away in Egypt on the 20th of Tevet in 1204 (4965).

Printing of Talmud (1483)

The first volume of the Babylonian Talmud, the tractate Berachot, was printed in Soncino, Italy, on the 20th of Tevet of the year 5244 from creation (1483).

Shabbat, 21 Tevet, 5779 - December 29, 2018
Shimon Born (1567 BCE)

Shimon, the second son of Jacob and Leah and the progenitor of the Israelite tribe of Shimon, was born on Tevet 21 (according to another opinion, on Tevet 28), of the year 2194 from creation (1567 BCE), nine years after Jacob's arrival in Charan.