

Thought of the Week

The Torah leaves us basically unprepared for its description of the events that are recorded for us in this week's parsha. When we last left the family of Israel at the conclusion of last week's parsha of Vayechi, the Jews found themselves comfortable, affluent, protected and settled well in the land of Goshen.

The Torah does not describe to us the process by which this situation so radically changed into becoming a slave state for the Jews. It only tells us of a new king who didn't know Yosef and, for reasons not explicitly mentioned in the Torah, became a hater and persecutor of the Jews.

The Torah seems to indicate that this is almost a natural state of affairs – to be expected. The Egyptian exile begins on a high note, deteriorates into abject sorrow and attempted genocide and ends with miraculous redemption. The Torah does not dwell upon any motives for the occurrence of this pattern of events. What did the Jews do wrong? Why was the Pharaoh such a hater? What were the economic or social factors of the time that allowed for such a dramatic worsening of the Jewish position in Egypt?

The Torah addresses none of these issues. It is almost as if the Torah wishes us to understand that these things happen blindly in human history. And, particularly in Jewish history, that the attempts of historians and sociologists to explain these irrational events and behavior patterns are really useless.

As has been often pointed out, all subsequent Jewish exiles – Babylonia, Spain, France, Germany, Eastern Europe, the Moslem Middle East – all seem to eerily conform to this original Egyptian template. As usual the Torah leaves us with more questions than it provides answers for. In effect, that is why the Torah is called the book of human life.

We are also unprepared to recognize the savior of Israel in the person of Moses. We are told how he was miraculously saved from the crocodiles of the Nile by the daughter of the Pharaoh and raised in the royal court. He sympathizes with the brutalized Jewish slaves, defends them, and is forced to flee from Egypt. We hear nothing regarding Moses for the next sixty years until he reemerges as a shepherd in Midian, married to the daughter of...

[continued inside...]

בס"ד

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Parshas Shemos
December 24-25

פרשת שמות
י"ח טבת



Shabbos Schedule



Candle lighting:	4:22pm
Mincha - Friday:	4:22pm
Parsha Chaburah by Simcha Pechter:	7:55am
Rabbi's Mishlei Shiur:	8:15am
Shacharis:	8:45am
Sof Zman Krias Shema:	9:41am
Kiddush is sponsored by David and Sharyn Chase in honor of David's Grandmother's first Jahrzeit (18 Tevet). Gladys Hyman, Shayna Gittel bas Daniel haLevi.	
Mincha:	4:15pm
Chabura given by Ari Weintraub on the topic of Reciting Kiddush Levana after a Lunar Eclipse.	
Medical Halacha Shiur given by Dr Daniel Eisenberg.	
Maariv:	5:26pm

Questions? Comments! Sponsorships\$ weeklyupdate@yiml.org

Weekday Davening Times

Shacharis:	Sunday and Friday:	8:00am
	Monday and Thursday:	6:40am
	Tuesday and Wednesday:	6:50am
Mincha/Maariv:	Sunday:	4:30pm
Maariv:	Monday through Thursday:	7:45pm
Mincha and Candle Lighting	Friday:	4:27pm

Weekday Shiurim

Daily Mussar Shiur:	15 minutes before Shacharis
Mishna Brura:	Mon and Wed after Maariv
Melachim Aleph Shiur:	Monday at 8pm
Halacha Shiur:	Tuesday at 8:30pm.
Nefesh HaChaim:	Thursday at 10:10pm

Check with Dr Daniel Eisenberg to confirm.

The Chevra Mishnayos is learning Seder Moed. See shul bulletin board to sign up or email eisenber@pol.net with your name and the masechta (and chapters) you intend to learn.

Women's Learning Experience - Fall Session

Mon at 9:00am: Tehillim for Cholim, at the Eisenberg home.
Mon at 9:30am: Parsha HaShavua class has been cancelled.
Tues at 9:30am: Rabbi Shmidman teaches Tehillim at LMS.
Tues at 8:00pm: Stacey Goldman teaches about the Imahot at the Werrin home, 161 Highland Circle, Bala.
Wed at 9:00am: Rachael Biberfeld teaches Michtav M'Eliyahu.
Thurs at 9:30am: Rabbi Steinberg teaches The Chazon Ish - Faith and Trust.
All classes at 8 Concord Circle, unless otherwise noted. For information or free babysitting, call Janis Fine 610-888-0477.

To subscribe to the YIML email list, visit
<http://mail.chaseplanet.us/mailman/listinfo/yiml>

Thought of the Week, continued

Yitro, the local religious chief who, at this time, is still a pagan. Hardly the resume' that one would expect for the leader of Israel, the greatest of all prophets and the teacher of all human kind.

Where did his holiness and greatness stem from, how was it developed, who were his mentors and what were his experiences over those long decades of separation from his people? The Torah gives us no clue or answer to these questions. It effectively points out that greatness oftentimes comes from unexpected sources and from people and leaders who operate outside of the usual establishment circles.

All of life is a mystery and certainly the Jewish story remains in its base an inexplicable one. This therefore sets the stage for everything else that will now follow in the Torah. It is why the Jewish people, when accepting the Torah pledge to God that "we will do and then perhaps try to understand," if we wish to understand first we will never come to do. The Divine hand guides us but it is never subject to our rational thoughts and explanations.

Adapted from "Do and then Understand" by Rabbi Berel Wein
<http://www.torah.org/learning/rabbiwein/5771/shemos.html>

Bnos of Bala Cynwyd from 2:45 to 3:45pm at LMS. Please pay yearly membership dues (\$36 per girl) if your daughter attends Bnos. Contact Meira Friedman 610-617-9529 for information.
Pirchei of Bala Cynwyd from 2:45 to 3:45pm at LMS in the Social Hall. Grades K-8th. To help sponsor a Shabbos or for information contact Rabbi Ari Silver at 610-6686-6833 or SilverDollar@verizon.net

We regret to inform you of the passing of Mr. Chaim Steger z"l, beloved father of Mrs. Miriam Lichtenstein. Mrs. Lichtenstein will return to Philadelphia to continue shiva at the Lichtenstein home, 41 North Highland Ave, Bala Cynwyd, beginning 5:30pm Sunday until Tuesday morning. May the family be comforted among the aveilei Tzion veYerushalayim.