

# Kinder Torah®



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table – Parshas Shemos

In honor of our dear grand-daughter Michal Steinig's Bat Mitzvah

In honor of all of our dear grandchildren

By Mirele and Melvin Steinig



## Shovavim

**T**hese weeks during which we read the first eight parshios of Sefer Shemos are referred to as "Shovavim". The word is an anagram of the first letters of the parshios. These are the weeks that the Jewish people went down to Egypt and were redeemed from slavery. The Meam Loaz explains that one of the reasons for the enslavement was purification. They hard labor was a purification process for certain sins. These weeks are an opportunity for us also. If we engage in teshuva, strengthen our learning, and our prayer, we can also purify ourselves.

### Kinderlach . . .

We receive special *siyata dishmaya* (Heavenly assistance) during these weeks. Do you remember how we worked so hard in Elul and Tishrei? We have a new opportunity now for teshuva. Let us all try to strengthen our learning, pray more slowly and with more *kavannah* (concentration). Look for opportunities to do *chesed* (acts of kindness) for people. With Hashem's help, we can reach new heights during these weeks.

## Now It Is Known!

"Indeed, the matter is known" (Shemos 2:14). What was known? The simple interpretation of the verse implies that the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu had killed an Egyptian, was now public knowledge. The day before he had seen the Egyptian beating a Jewish man. He struck down the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. The next day he saw two Jews quarreling and tried to make peace between them. The wicked one said to Moshe, "Do you propose to murder me as you murdered the Egyptian?" Moshe thought, "Indeed, the matter is known" (Shemos 2:14).

**R**ashi offers a deeper explanation of the verse from the Medrash. Moshe Rabbeinu was wondering why the Jewish people were subjected to such slavery, hard labor, and torture. When he heard the words of *loshon hora* spoken by the wicked man, he understood that this was the reason for their suffering. The Chofetz Chaim *zt"l* points out that they had committed other very serious sins. They worshipped *avodah zara* (foreign gods). Yet, until they spoke badly about their fellow Jews, the *Satan* (Evil Angel) could not speak badly about them. That is the tremendous destructive power of *loshon hora*. It allows you to be punished for other sins.

### Kinderlach . . .

We are all striving to do as many mitzvos and as few *aveyros* (sins) as possible. Why? Because we know that we will receive reward for the mitzvos and punishment for the *aveyros*. However, we learn something very important here. Our bad speech gives the accuser the power to speak badly about us. If we do not speak *loshon hora*, the news of our *aveyros* will not reach Hashem's ears. Therefore, this one mitzvah can help us avoid punishment for all of our *aveyros*.

## Every Place Is Holy

**T**he bush was burning with fire, but it was not consumed. Moshe thought, 'I will turn aside now and look at this great sight – why is the bush not burned? . . . Hashem called out to Moshe from the bush . . . 'Remove your shoes from your feet, for the place upon which you stand is holy ground'" (Shemos 3:2-5).

**T**he Chofetz Chaim *zt"l* warns us with the words from Pirkei Avos, "Do not say that when I have free

time, I will learn." A person thinks that when Hashem makes his situation more comfortable, then he will have the time and peace of mind to learn and do mitzvos properly. Now, however, he is too busy tending to other things. To answer this the verse says, "The place upon which you stand" – this situation that you are in right now – "is holy ground" – it is possible that Hashem wants you specifically to learn and do mitzvos under these trying circumstances. The Chofetz Chaim finishes off with the statement from our sages; "The reward is proportional to the difficulty." The Medrash on Shir HaShirim states that one who learns when it is difficult receives 1000 rewards. Learning without difficulty merits only 200 rewards.

### Kinderlach . . .

"I'm too tired." "I'm hungry." "My feet hurt." "My friend wants to come to play." "I don't feel like it." These are all reasons we can give to not do a mitzvah. They may be very good reasons. The Chofetz Chaim *zt"l* is telling us that Hashem knows these reasons. Even so, He is still giving you the opportunity to do this mitzvah. He wants you to do the mitzvah even though it is difficult. In fact, in a way it is even better to do a mitzvah when it is difficult. The reward is so much greater. Next time that you are tired, hungry, or busy, and Imma asks you to do a mitzvah, take a deep breath and say, "Thank you Imma. I'm coming right away. I want a big reward for this mitzvah!"

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