

THE KTM DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



HOGWARTS, MIDIAN & MITZRAYIM: MOSHE'S EXODUS OF IDENTITY

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

Redemption is not complete when the chains fall away - it is only beginning. German-

Jewish social psychologist and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm once observed that freedom alone does not satisfy the human soul. A person, he wrote, needs "a frame of orientation and an object of devotion." Without belonging, freedom becomes disorientation; liberation becomes loneliness. A person may escape oppression and still feel exiled within.

That insight lies at the heart of one of the most subtle moments in Sefer Shemot. In our parasha, Moshe is re-united with his family (Shemot 18:2-4):

וַיִּקַּח יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֶת-זִפּוֹרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחֵר שְׁלוּחֶיהָ
וְאֶת שְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר שָׁם הָאֱלֹהִים לָהֶם כִּי אָמַר גֹּד הָיִיתִי
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְשָׁם הָאֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ אָבִי בְעֶזְרִי
וַיַּצִּילֵנִי מִתַּרְבַּע פַּרְעֹה:

So Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after she had been sent home, and her two sons—of whom one was named Gershom, that is to say, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land"; and the other was named Eliezer, meaning, "The God of my father was my help, delivering me from the sword of Pharaoh."

There are many questions regarding this brief passage: Why must the Torah make mention of Moshe's sons here when it is seemingly inconsequential to the storyline? Moreover, the Torah doesn't stop at naming Moshe's sons, but gives the meanings behind their names - this certainly is out-of-place. This is especially curious since we have already been told the explanation for Gershom's name (Shmot 2:22), and have never been told the name - let alone the explanation - of Moshe's second son.

To understand this, let us turn to one of the most beloved stories of all time: Harry Potter. Harry begins life as an outsider in every sense. He lives with the Dursleys, but he does not belong to them. He does not know his past, his people, or his place in the world. This all changes when Hagrid utters a few potent words: "You're a wizard, Harry." But even when he escapes the cupboard under the stairs, even when he enters Hogwarts, his early journey is not yet one of belonging. It is confusion, doubt, and the uneasy feeling of being an impostor in someone else's story.

Only slowly does Harry's identity change. Through shared struggle, loss, and responsibility, he stops being "the boy who survived" and becomes

part of a people, a history, a destiny. His true transformation is not about magical power. It is about discovering where he belongs.

This is the story of Moshe Rabbeinu.

When Moshe first names Gershom, he is a man without a place. Born a Hebrew, raised Egyptian, forced to flee, exiled for decades before finally settling in Midian - he belongs nowhere. Even decades after leaving Egypt, he describes himself as an "ish Mitzri." (Shmot 2:19) Exile is not just where he lives; it is how he understands himself. Moshe has no place and no people. He longs for an Egypt that never really existed; an Egypt he imagined he had once belonged.

This inner estrangement explains his hesitation at the burning bush. When Moshe says, "They will say 'Hashem never appeared to you'" (Shmot 4:1), the Netziv explains that he does not doubt revelation in general. He doubts revelation to him. Why would God appear to a man who is not fully among his people? Moshe is an "Ish Mitzri" from Midian; he sees himself as "Gershom" - a stranger.

Then comes the Exodus.

Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt, but Moshe undergoes a parallel redemption. He leads them through slavery, plague, sea, and song. He stands not beside Israel, but at their head. Shared destiny reshapes identity. The man who once stood between worlds now stands within one.

Now the name Gershom is repeated - but its meaning has shifted. "I was a stranger in a foreign land" no longer speaks only of Egypt or Midian. It speaks of the years Moshe was estranged from his own people. He had been distant. Now he has returned. His place is of his people.

This is why Eliezer's name can only be revealed and explained now: "אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי בְעֶזְרִי." This is a new theology. Not the God of the fugitive, but the God of the fathers. Moshe no longer defines himself by foreignness, but by belonging to a chain, a covenant, a people. His life story is no longer a tale of wandering, but of Divine guidance toward a place.

This is why the Torah places the sons' names here. They are Moshe's spiritual autobiography. The Exodus is complete not only when Israel is free, but when Moshe himself is no longer existentially exiled. The redeemer has found his people.



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Harry Potter's story, in a distant echo, teaches the same human truth. Freedom from the Dursleys was not enough. Harry had to find Hogwarts, his friends, his lineage, his role in a shared struggle. Only then could he become who he was meant to be.

Moshe's journey followed that same inner arc. His transformation did not precede redemption; it unfolded within it. As he risked himself for Israel, spoke for them, and suffered with them, the distance that once defined him dissolved. Leadership became the path through which the outsider came home.

Fromm was right: freedom without belonging is still exile. Sefer Shemot teaches that redemption means more than leaving Egypt. It means discovering one's makom - one's place within a people and their story.

The man who once said "גֹּד הָיִיתִי", defined by displacement, ends the journeyable to say "אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי", anchored in belonging. Redemption, then, is not merely an escape from bondage; it is the healing of estrangement — the passage from wandering to home. Israel left Egypt, but Moshe left exile. And in that quiet inner return, when the stranger became part of a people and their story, Yetziat Mitzrayim reached its deepest completion.



SHABBAT'S GREATEST HITS: YA ECHSOF

BY EVYATAR KERNER

Monday morning you sit in prayer beside someone who davens differently than you.

Wednesday afternoon at parent-teacher meetings, the parent next to you educates their children in a completely different way. Thursday evening in the supermarket line, someone wears a different kippah, speaks differently, lives differently.

Each encounter widens the gap. Quietly, without words, categories form: "them" and "us." We remain Jews together, we keep mitzvot together, but every meeting with someone from a different background or approach leaves a subtle feeling: we're just not the same.

Then Shabbat arrives, and we sing:

יְהִי אֶחָסֹף נָעִם שְׁבֶת הַמִּתְאַחֶדֶת וּמִתְאַחֶדֶת בְּסִגְלָהּ

I long for the sweetness of Shabbat that harmonizes and unites in Your treasure.

How does Shabbat unite?

During the week, differences dominate. One person's way of learning Torah differs from yours. Another's Shabbat observance looks different. They follow a different rabbi, vote differently, think differently. The distance grows - not in open conflict, but in quiet inner judgments.

And then the song says something

remarkable: Shabbat "unites in Your treasure." Shabbat belongs to all of us. The Hasid at his tish, the Lithuanian Jew learning all day, the Sephardi Jew singing ancestral piyutim - they are not keeping different Shabbats. It is one Shabbat. The same gift, given to the entire Jewish people.

Shabbat is not the property of a group or stream. It belongs to the nation.

The song continues:

מִשְׁךְ נָעִם יִרְאֶתְךָ לְעַם מִבְקָשִׁי רְצוֹן

Draw the sweetness of Your reverence to the nation that seeks Your will.

Not to a camp, not to a faction - to a nation. All of us seek God's will. Yet each of us assumes our path is the most correct, and slowly we stop seeing ourselves as one people. Shabbat reminds us: you are not "this group" and "that group." You are one nation seeking the same goal.

Then we ask:

קְדָשֶׁם בְּקִדְשֵׁת הַשְּׁבֶת הַמִּתְאַחֶדֶת בְּתוֹרָתְךָ

Sanctify them with the holiness of Shabbat that unites in Your Torah.

Notice: mit'achadet—"is uniting." It's a process. Shabbat itself takes all the shades, all the customs, and draws them together. Because Torah is God's word embodied in the world, and Shabbat is its expression.

When we keep Shabbat, it is not my Shabbat or your Shabbat. It is the Shabbat of the Torah. In that, we meet: Kudsha Brich Hu ve-Oraita ve-Yisrael chad hu: God, Torah, and Israel are one.

The final request is striking:

פָּתַח לָהֶם נָעִם וְרְצוֹן לְפָתוֹת שַׁעְרֵי רְצוֹן

Open for them sweetness and desire to open the gates of Your will.

Not just for me - for them. For those who think differently, pray differently, live differently. They too seek to open those gates. Once we recognize that the other person is also striving to reach the same place - only by a different path - the gaps shrink.

Shabbat is not only rest, prayer, or meals. It is a reminder that we are one nation, bound by Torah and a shared longing for closeness to the Creator. When we sing "Yah echsof" we are asking Shabbat to do this within us - to unite us, and remind us that beneath all differences, we are one.

A mission for Shabbat:

If there's someone close to you, family or a friend that you haven't spoken to in a long time because of some conflict, or you've simply avoided conversation, put your feelings aside and say to them with a smile: "Shabbat Shalom." Or if they're far away, send them a message: "Shabbat Shalom" or "Shavua Tov".



אין כמו שנה בארץ

BY SHALEV FAGEN, YESHIVAT LEV HATORAH

Hi everyone!

My name is Shalev Fagen, and I go to Yeshivat Lev Hatorah.

I was asked to write about my experiences here in Israel, and I honestly do not know where to start.

In Yeshiva, I've had the chance to learn from top level Rebbeim, like my Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Boaz Mori, my Sgan Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Cytrin, and my morning shiur Rebbe, Rav Siev, as well as countless others who've done and continue to do a tremendous job guiding me on the right path in my avodas Hashem.

Yeshiva is a great place, and even though not every yeshiva is the right fit for everyone, I do feel that Lev Hatorah is a place that accommodates everyone. I chose Lev specifically because of this level of customization. Some people have a strong connection with Hashem, and others find it

difficult to connect. Some can learn Gemara 10 hours a day, and "chap" (comprehend) a sugya even without any chazara (review), and others have trouble even waking up for Shachris. And that's ok. One should not ask themselves at the end of their yeshiva year "did I memorize all of Shas?" One should ask themselves "did I grow as much as I could every day?" I believe that with 6 different morning shiurim, and many different shiurim and classes throughout the day, that Lev is inherently built on this customization, which is why I chose to go here.

The biggest highlight of my year so far was for sure the Eilat trip, back in November. When the yeshiva took us down to Eilat, I was expecting a boring bus ride, and a low enthusiasm trip with little to no activities. B"H I was very wrong! The first day, we got there in the afternoon, with enough time for a short hike by the Egyptian border, and some snorkeling/scuba diving. That night,

after bowling, we had some free time which I used to go skating at the ice mall, with some fellow Canadians. The second day, we woke up at 3:30am, and hiked Har Shlomo. It was very difficult, but I had so much fun spending time getting to know friends and rebbeim, and swimming in the Red Sea.

Since I started yeshiva, I've come to genuinely have a love for just sitting down and opening a Sefer. While I still have some everyday struggles, and I have a long way to go, I feel like I've grown so much more than I could have ever imagined back when I was in high school. For me, it's a combination of the learning environment in the "beis", as well as being in Israel and getting to be with my people on our historic land, and everyday I thank Hashem for putting me in this environment where I can learn His Torah and keep His mitzvos to the best of my abilities.

Shalev Fagen is an alumnus of Hebrew Academy High School



HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

Question: Is it permissible for a Wolt courier (in Israel) to collect orders from non-kosher

restaurants and deliver them to their destination? Is there room to "assume" that perhaps the person placing the order is not Jewish, or that there is a non-Jewish worker in the home, etc., and that the food may have been ordered for them? I should note that the courier (at least in Wolt) is not obligated to collect orders from all stores; rather, he chooses when and from whom to pick up. However, in certain cities this would significantly affect his livelihood (by about 30%).

Answer: This issue involves several possible prohibitions. However, even if grounds could be found to be lenient with respect to each formal prohibition, in practice it does not seem to be God's will that an observant Jew regularly market non-kosher food to other Jews, even if he works on behalf of another company. Therefore, one should avoid this as much as possible and not serve as a courier delivering non-kosher food. In cases of doubt there may be room for leniency, especially on an occasional basis.

In greater detail:

At a basic level, the situation in which an observant Jew participates - on any level - in marketing food prohibited by halakhah is problematic, particularly when done regularly.

First, one must consider whether this constitutes chilul Hashem (see Shevet HaLevi 3:21). For example, would it be appropriate for an observant Jew to participate in organizing activities that desecrate Shabbat? The very partnership in such matters is problematic, even if one could debate which particular actions are technically prohibited and which are not.

Second, we must consider whether this

constitutes strengthening the hands of sinners (chizuk yedei ovrei aveirah). The Mishnah writes (Shevi'it 4:3; 5:9; similarly Gittin 61a): "We support the hands of non-Jews in Shemitah, but not those of Jews." The Gemara (Gittin 62a) explains that one may not offer encouraging words to a Jew committing a transgression. This is codified in halakhah (Magen Avraham 347:4; Mishnah Berurah 347:7): it is proper to wish success to someone engaged in permitted labor - even a non-Jew - but one may not say so to someone engaged in prohibited work.

In our case, since the courier enters a non-kosher restaurant and markets its goods, this may be equivalent (or even more so) than telling the restaurant owner "may your work succeed." Especially since, as defined in the question, the courier can choose which restaurants to deliver for and choose a non-kosher one.

Furthermore, since Wolt is a company devoted specifically to food distribution, this strengthens the perception that the courier is a partner in the process of distributing non-kosher food and engaging in commerce with prohibited items (Shulchan Aruch YD 117:1), more than if it were a general delivery company. Just as a cook and waiter assist in the enterprise, so too the courier who fulfills the order.

In addition, we must consider whether there are biblical prohibitions of "lifnei iver" (placing a stumbling block) or the rabbinic prohibition of mesaye'a (assisting sin) [see Responsa Binyan Tzion 15].

The Torah forbids giving prohibited items to a Jew (Avodah Zarah 6b) under "lifnei iver" (Vayikra 19:14). However, the Gemara explains this applies biblically only where the recipient could not obtain the sin independently ("two sides of the river"). Here it seems the prohibition would not apply, since another courier could deliver.

Yet the Mishneh LaMelech (Hil. Malveh

VeLoveh 4:2) rules that the exemption applies only if the sinner could sin without another Jew's help. If every option involves a Jew assisting, lifnei iver may still apply. However, others (Knesset HaGedolah, Chafetz Chaim) disagree. Still, since some Wolt couriers are non-Jewish, lifnei iver likely does not apply.

Even if lifnei iver does not apply, there may still be the rabbinic prohibition of mesaye'a. Some Rishonim (Tosafot Shabbat 3a) hold this applies, and Shulchan Aruch (OC 347:1) rules accordingly. Responsa Mishneh Halachot (5:103) writes that one may not be an employee of a Jew trading in prohibited food because of mesaye'a.

There are grounds for leniency based on the Shach (YD 151:6) regarding assisting an apostate, but many authorities dispute this, and it is unclear the sellers or buyers qualify as such.

Additionally, one must consider that the assistance occurs at the time of the transgression - delivery is for immediate consumption.

As for the suggestion that perhaps the customer is not Jewish, or has a non-Jewish worker, such speculation does not remove concerns of chilul Hashem or strengthening sinners, and such assumptions are unlikely.

Conclusion: Even if formal prohibitions might be avoided, practically it does not seem God's will that an observant Jew regularly market non-kosher food to Jews. Therefore one should avoid this as much as possible. One should seek livelihood in permitted ways, and in the merit of guarding kashrut will be blessed with good sustenance.

If one nevertheless chooses to do so, it would be proper to minimize visible religious identifiers (tucking in tzitzit, wearing a helmet, etc.) to reduce chilul Hashem.

PARNESS HAYOM :: SHEVAT

2 Shevat I The Drazin Family in memory of Gertrude Drazin z"l

9 Shevat I Russell and Steven Samuels in memory of their grandfather, Aron Eichenbaum z"l

11 Shevat I Drs. Rochel and Hyman Schipper in memory of her grandfather, David Jacob Rubinstein z"l

14 Shevat I Susan Lieberman and family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of Susan's mother, Esther Eisenstein - Esther bat Shia Zelig z"l.

28 Shevat I Joan Lieberman in memory of her father, Zalman Singer z"l

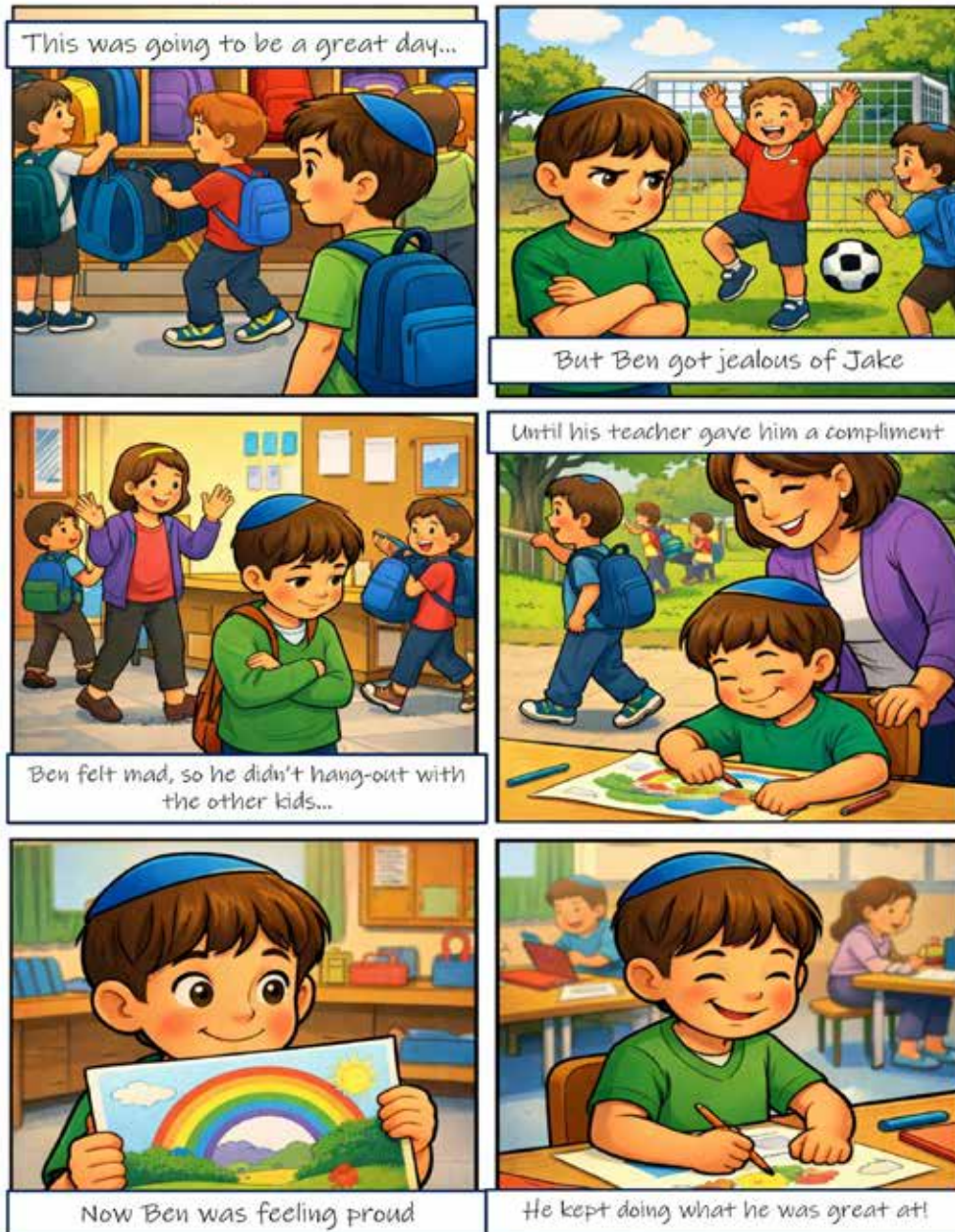
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One of the Aseret Ha'Dibrot in our parasha is "לא תחמוד" – this means not to be jealous of, or to want, what other people have. Hashem gave every person their own package. My job is to use my package well — not wish I had someone else's. This commandment teaches: You are not in a competition for worth. Different doesn't mean better. Happiness comes from inside, not from comparison.