



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
Member of Chief Rabbinate of Israel



1

עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Shemot

HAMELECH

Yosef in Mitzrayim

Sefer Shemot opens with a list of the names of Yaakov's sons who came down to Mitzrayim, each with his household. "And Yosef was in Mitzrayim." Now, we already know that Yosef was in Mitzrayim. What is the Torah teaching us by reiterating that fact?

Comments Rashi: The *pasuk* is telling you the righteousness of Yosef. This was the same Yosef who had watched his father's sheep. That same Yosef spent many years in Mitzrayim, eventually becoming king. He remained staunch in his righteousness.

Now this is no small feat. As the saying goes: Power tends to corrupt. We are in awe of this Yosef who withstood all of his challenges and remained loyal to his faith. He did not allow his position to get to his head. He did not exhibit any haughtiness whatsoever. He could have taken revenge from his brothers and dealt with them harshly. But, no, he did none of that. He was forgiving and apologetic.

Moshe and Aharon

In Parashas Vaera, we find a similar expression in reference to Moshe and Aharon. (Shemot 6:27) "They were Moshe and Aharon." Rashi explains: They remained righteous messengers from beginning until end.

Moshe and Aharon each had many a rough moment. They also had their rise to greatness. But that did not generate any conceit. On the contrary. It only humbled them more. "Humility" became synonymous with "Moshe Rabbeinu." How did they manage to keep their heads on

straight, when so many kings and politicians lose themselves right after they rise to power?

Chullin 89a points out this contrast. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Yisrael: I cherish you dearly, especially for this that the more greatness with which I shower you, you humble yourselves before Me more and more.

I gave greatness to Avraham and he equated himself with dirt and ashes. I gave greatness to Moshe and Aharon, and they said, "What are we?" I gave greatness to Dovid and he called himself a lowly worm.

Heathens are not like that, continues Hashem. I gave greatness to Nimrod and he rebelled against Me. I gave greatness to Pharaoh and he defied Me. I gave greatness to Sahheriv and he defamed Me. I gave greatness to Nevuchadnetzar and he announced his plan to rise to the Heavens to become My equal. I gave greatness to Hiram, king of Zur, and he claimed to be divine.

What is the Difference?

Maharal (Netivot Olam, Netiv Anava, chap. 2) explains that the heathens focus on the material side of their greatness. They get caught up in the wine and dine, fame and glamour, publicity and applause. Their hearts swell with pride and they forget about Hashem.

True Jews focus on "tafkid". They are always asking themselves: What is my mission here on earth? How can I use all of the means at my disposal to create a greater awareness of Hashem's Sovereignty. With that in mind, each endowment brings with it greater responsibility. And that is very humbling and scary. The moment a Jew has more means at his disposal, be them



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
Member of Chief Rabbinate of Israel



Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

money or power, that only means that their job became all the more difficult and encompassing. That is truly a humbling thought.

King Uziyahu is Set Free!

King Uziyahu exhibited conceit and Hashem struck him with leprosy. He had to be dethroned in his lifetime and his righteous son, Yotam, reigned in his stead. When Uziyahu was dethroned, the prophet described this status as "liberty" – "chafshiyut." (Melochim II 15:5) Why? Explains Radak: Because kingship is servitude! It is no easy task to rule over a nation, to judge them and take care of their needs. So when he was sentenced to indefinite *bidud*, that was a "freedom" of sorts, a freedom from the intense burden of kingly responsibilities.

Leaders and Servants

In Horiot 10a, Rabban Gamliel appointed two Rabbis to positions of communal authority. At first, they did not want to accept the job. Rabban Gamliel told them, "Do you think I am giving you authority? I am giving you servitude!"

Meiri (ad loc) explains: Whoever takes a leadership position must be on guard not to become haughty and not to instill exaggerated fear of himself upon the people. He should not view himself as authority, rather as a public servant, with the attitude: I am just doing my job.

Sage Advice

When Shlomo Hamelech passed away, his son Rehavam took over. Now, Shlomo had levied heavy taxes upon the people, and they now approached the new king and requested respite. Rehavam had two cabinets: One of older, experienced advisors and one of youngsters.

He first turned to the older ones and asked for advice. They told him: If you act as a servant to this people and deal with them gently and good-heartedly, you will win them over and they will be forever loyal.

Unfortunately, Rehavam chose to follow the unsagely advice of his young advisors who told him to come across hard and unyielding, threatening to add additional taxes and to enforce the law with physical abuse.

It was not long before the majority of Yisrael rebelled against him and the Jewish People split into two.

Why Did they Die?

One of the sad sagas of our history was the story of *Pilegesh Begivah*, which resulted in a civil war, causing thousands of casualties and almost obliterating an entire tribe. It all began with a man who too easily became angry with his wife, causing her to run away. Of this, our Sages warn us: Do not instill great fear in the home, for that is what happened with *pilegesh begivah* and caused the untimely death of myriads of Jews and almost brought about the decimation of Shevet Binyamin.

[Sadly, not everyone learned this lesson. Even in our times, a woman was late at getting things ready one Friday, and because her husband was quick to flare his temper, she plugged in the hot plate after Shabbat had already begun! She was too scared of her husband's reaction had he not come home to hot food! And because of that, *chillul Shabbat!*]

The Man for the Job

Why was Moshe chosen for the job of leading the Jewish People? He was first tried and tested in his



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
Member of Chief Rabbinate of Israel



Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

role as a shepherd, as was Dovid Hamelech. What did Moshe do? He was tending to Yitro's sheep and one little kid (young goat) ran away. Moshe ran after it and found it drinking from a pool of water. Moshe said, "I did not know that you were so thirsty! You must be so tired!" Moshe then picked up the kid and carried it on his shoulders.

Hashem saw this and said, "If you have compassion to tend to a person's sheep, you will now get the job of tending to My flock."

What does Hashem look for in a leader? Someone who cares about each individual. Someone who cares has a chance at keeping that trait even after achieving a leadership position.

Priorities

People must know their priorities in life. Even if they take on a position with responsibilities, they must never neglect their responsibilities in the home. Some people allow their job to take over their lives. This is very sad. Sometimes they miss out on *davening* with a *minyan*. Sometimes they skip their daily *shiur* or *chavruta*. We must never lose sight of our true mission in this world. We must always put everything in perspective.

Some people get so involved in their work that their families suffer as a result. They no longer have time for their spouses and children. This is very sad. A person must come home timely after his workday and leave his work at the office. When you're home, you're home. Be there for your family. Give them the attention they need.

This goes for learning people as well. Do you know how many wives of *averichim* have cried to me that they feel totally neglected because their husbands are so involved in their learning?

Baruch Hashem, if that is their problem. At the same time, I had to sit down with these *matmidim* and give them refresher courses in Shalom Bayit 101. At least with Bnei Torah there is usually someone to talk to, a listening ear. Many wives have thanked me for restoring the harmony in their homes.

Learning from the Greats

When I learned in Yeshivat Be'er Yaakov, I would frequently see the *Mashgiach*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe, walking with his wife in the evenings. He taught us by example how to spend time with your wife and give her the attention she deserves.

When I was a young *avreich*, I once went with my wife on Chol Hamoed to Park Leumi in Ramat Gan. And whom did I see going on a boat ride with his wife? HaRav Benzion Abba Shaul! It was a half-hour boat ride and his time was precious. But so was his wife! He told me afterwards that it is a *mitzvah* to make your wife happy on the Chag! This was the right thing to do, so it was not *bitul Torah*!

Let us learn from our great ones throughout the generations, not to allow positions of power or any position for that matter, to dwarf our responsibilities to our families. Let us view life, with all of its packages and endowments, as one big task of fulfilling Hashem's will. With that approach we will *be'ezrat Hashem* make the right decisions and set aside time for each necessary endeavor. This way, we will bring the *Shechinah* into our homes and naturally see success in all that we do.

Shabbat Shalom Umevorach,
Mordechai Malka