



KINDER TORAH

701

PARASHAS SHEMOS

Dedicated in memory of Rabbi Chaim Zevulun Yerachmiel Glixman z"l ❖ Yahrzeit 21 Teves 5767

BYE BYE

"It was so nice of you to visit, Cousin Dave."

"Thank you Avi, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Your family's hospitality is tops. Delicious food and drink, comfortable accommodations, great company; what more could a guest ask for?"

"Come Avi, let's all escort Dave out together. Please put your coat on Avi, it's cold outside."

"Abba, since it's so cold, could I just say good bye to Cousin Dave right here at the door?"

"You could, Avi, but you would be missing an important mitzvah."

"Really Abba? Is there a mitzvah to go outside today?"

"No, Avi, but there is a mitzvah to escort your guests *daled amos* (four cubits or about two meters) outside of the door of your house."

"Why is that Abba?"

"It is the final part of the mitzvah of welcoming guests into our home. We open our home to them, feed them, and give them a place to sleep. At the end of their stay, we escort them on their way. This part of the mitzvah is so important that the Rambam writes that we receive more reward for it than all other parts of the mitzvah."

"Why is it so important, Abba?"

"When a person leaves with a warm sendoff, his heart is happy. His journey begins on the right foot. We have done our part to make his journey a safe and pleasant one."

"How do we know this Abba?"

"Avi, I was waiting for you to ask that question."

"Don't tell me Abba. I'll bet it is in this week's parasha."

"Right you are Avi. Moshe Rabbeinu grew up in the home of Paroh, the king of Mitzraim. He fled from Mitzraim after killing a Mitzri who was beating a Jewish slave. Moshe went to Midian, where he met and married Zipporah, the daughter of Yisro. After living there for several years, he took his wife and sons and prepared to return to Egypt. Yisro, his father-in-law said to him, 'Go in peace' (Bereshis 4:18). The Gemora (Berachos 64a) informs us that this is the proper sendoff to give a person."

"Come, Abba. Where is my coat? I want to go out and give Cousin Dave a good farewell."

"Let's all go together Avi."

"Bye Cousin Dave! It was great having you with us! Go in peace."

Avi turns to his father and says . . .

"Abba, can you wake me up before you leave tomorrow morning?"

"That's very early, Avi."

"I know Abba, but it is important."

"Sure Avi. What's doing?"

"I want to give you a good farewell when you go."

"Avi, that is so sweet of you."

"Why not, Abba? You take care of all of us. We can surely give you a good send-off every morning."

"Avi, that would just make my whole day."

"My pleasure and my mitzvah, Abba."

Kinderlach . . .

A good sendoff is an important mitzvah that is easy to do. When your friend leaves your home, walk with him daled amos. When your Shabbos guests go home after their meal, escort them out of your home. When Abba leaves the home every morning, give him a beautiful sendoff. A good farewell is the start of a great trip.

THE SHEPHERD

"Abba, we have an interesting homework assignment today."

"What is it, Avi?"

"We are supposed to describe the job of a shepherd, and imagine ourselves shepherding a flock of sheep. I don't know anything about shepherding. Can you



please help me Abba?"

"My pleasure, Avi. A shepherd has a flock of sheep that he must tend to. Sheep eat grass and other vegetation. His job is to feed his sheep by allowing them to graze on the grass. However, he must be very careful not to take them into private property, because they will damage the vegetation there. He has a rod in his hand, which he uses to guide them along the straight path, to only those places that are permissible. If they begin to wander off, he gives them a 'potch' with the rod. He also protects them from wild animals and other dangers. A good shepherd cares for his sheep with love and mercy. Our parasha speaks about this."

"Really? Where, Abba?"

"Chapter three, the first verse. 'Moshe was shepherding the sheep of Yisro, his father-in-law.' The Shelah HaKadosh compares Moshe's shepherding his sheep to Hashem's shepherding of Klal Yisrael."

"That sounds very interesting, Abba. What is the connection?"

"The Shelah describes the job of a shepherd, as I just explained to you. He then states that Hashem is our shepherd. He

keeps us on the straight path. He always has the rod in His hand (so to speak) ready to reprimand us if we begin to wander off. He cares for us with love and mercy, protecting us from many dangers."

"Is this still true nowadays, Abba?"

"Definitely, Avi. It is important for us to understand where we are situated in history, and to see Hashem's guiding and loving hand shepherding us. We are awaiting the final *geula* (redemption) from our long *golus* (exile), just as our ancestors awaited the *geula* from Mitzrayim. The Vilna Gaon relates that there were four factors that brought about the *geula* from Mitzrayim. They are contained in his commentary on the following verse. 'Hashem heard their moaning and He remembered His bris with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Hashem saw the Children of Israel and Hashem knew' (Shemos 2:24,25). 'Their moaning' refers to the suffering they endured in Mitzrayim. 'He remembered His bris with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov' refers to the *zechus* (merits) of the forefathers. The extra word in the verse, 'es' adds the *zechus* of the foremothers. 'Hashem saw the Children of Israel and Hashem knew.' What did He know? He knew that they did *teshuva* in their hearts and in their deeds. This was the fourth factor that was necessary for the *geula* to come."

"What about today, Abba?"

"We are awaiting our *geula*, Avi. We still have the merits of the forefathers and foremothers. We have suffered and continue to endure the anguish of *golus*. We have only one thing left to do."

"Teshuva."

"Exactly, Avi. Hashem wants us to turn to Him and realize that He is the One who will redeem us. He is our hope and our salvation. We must do *teshuva* and hope and pray that the *geula* will come today - this minute!"

"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . .

We are all awaiting the final geula. We pray for it three times a day. Our Sages tell us that the final redemption will be like the first one. This time, as last time the merit of teshuva helps us. We are now beginning the weeks of Shovavim Tat - a time ripe for teshuva. These eight weeks, we are encouraged to "Shuvu bonim shovavim," "Return O wayward sons." Now is the time to do teshuva, and bring the geula, speedily and in our days, amen.

Parasha Questions:

- Who was the Jew that the Mitzri hit? (2:11)
- What did Moshe Rabbeinu lose by angering Hashem? (Rashi 4:14)
- What was Paroh's first response to Moshe's request to send out the Jewish people? (5:2)

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