

Dvar Torah for Parshat Shemot

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Based on Likutey Halakhot, Taaruvot 3:2–3

“And the Israelites were fertile and prolific; their population increased greatly. They became so numerous that the land was filled with them” (Exodus 1:7).

The Torah tell us about the Jewish population explosion right before going into the account of the Exodus. What’s the connection?

We know that any time God needs to chastise the Jewish people, He always prepares the cure/solution before the disease/problem (Megilah 13b). The huge surge in the Israelite birth rate immediately prior to the pain and humiliation of the Egyptian exile was a seed for the geulah (exodus) that was to take place. It is a suggestion for us, how we can bring the future, final geulah that much sooner.

Reb Noson acquaints us with the following concept: the more Jews there are, the more sacred daat (God consciousness) there is; the more sacred daat there is, the sooner the geulah arrives. How does this work?

We know from our own first-hand experience, as well as from history, that pain is a major feature of exile. The genesis of exile-pain, whether inflicted by others or ourselves, is misguided thinking. When non-Jewish concepts, values and weltanschauung hold sway, the inevitable results are a decline in faith (in God, His Torah and her teachers) and in the exercise of defining Jewish values—kindness, modesty and compassion. Misconceptions about what Jews do or think, whether entertained by Jew or gentile,

lead to slavery: mental, emotional, physical, financial and spiritual.

When Moshe Rabbeinu (our teacher) saw that so many Israelites were freed from Egypt and on their way to receive the Torah, he thought mankind's redemption was at hand. He thought there were enough Israelites with kosher thoughts and attitudes to induce the rest of the world—starting with the Mixed Multitude (non-Jews who departed Egypt with the Israelites)—to accept the notion of “God is One and His Name is One.” That will definitely happen, and soon, we pray. But conditions weren't ripe then. The Mixed Multitude proved incorrigible and ended up harming the Israelites.

So in later Egypt we continued our history, always accompanied by some great tzaddik reprising the role of Moshe Rabbeinu, always trying to correct the damage done by the Mixed Multitude. The damage is undone when every little Jew gets born and grows up thinking and behaving as a Jew should. The damage is undone as each of us gets re-born, from day to day and hour to hour, thinking and behaving a bit more Jewishly.

May we soon see the fulfillment of the prophecy, “The smallest will number in the thousands and the least will be a mighty nation. I, God, will hasten it, in due time” (Isaiah 60:22). Amen.

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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