

Pasrshas Shmos *Rabbis Without Borders*

A GOOD STORY NEEDS A BEGINNING, A MIDDLE AND AN END... BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.

The news this week of the assassination of a beloved leader in a volatile region has forced many of us to brush up on our knowledge of the history of Pakistan. The story of a leader exiled, and, then returning, at great risk; the concept of a “Ku...” by a general who still sits in power; the notion of killing the former when she is no longer in power – all of this should not be new to us, and indeed, when we touch up on our history of, LaHavdil, Moshe Rabeinu this week, we should be struck by the similarity present history shares with Midrashik record.

There is a glaring mystery regarding the missing years of Moshe’s life: the Torah informs us of Moshe’s running away at the tender age of 18 (some say 17, others 20) and, in that very same Pasuk, we are told of his settling in Midian. What, if anything, happened in-between? Did Moshe return to Egypt to save the Jews at such a young age? Surely, if he died at 120, and we know the Makkos only lasted for about one year and the sojourn in the wilderness was for 40 years, then, Moshe should have been close 80 upon his return!

The Yalkut Shimoni (# 168), in an unattributed entry brings the following Midrash¹:

There was a land, Kush, whose king, Kokenus, was busy at war with the Bnei Kedem. Billam, who had recently fled Egypt, was able to incite the populace to revolt against the king while he fought at battle. Upon his return the king saw that the walls had been fortified on all sides and that Billam had succeeded in a Ku. As the king began to set up residence with his army just outside the now fortified capitol, a young man, Moshe, arrives after escaping death at the hands of Pharaoh. Moshe eventually succeeds in leading an invasion to take back Kush and they made Moshe the new king (Kukenus had died 9 years after Billam’s revolt). Unfortunately, after 40 years of loyal leadership,

¹ The Ramban who asks our questions, clearly did not have this Midrash, or perhaps did but did not feel it to be following simple Pshat, and had a different understanding of certain Pesukim in Divrei HaYamin.

Moshe was removed from his post and although many wanted him dead he was spared. It was then that he arrived in Midian.

Now, if Moshe was willing to lead Kush, if he was able to balance humility with an acknowledgment of his talents, if he was able to successfully guide *that* nation to tremendous victory, then, why would he be so disinclined, indeed averse, when approached to lead the Jewish people?

It would seem that statements like, “...*who am I...*”(3:11) and “...*I am not a man of words...*”(4:10) are beyond disingenuous considering his past triumphs and accomplishments².

Yet G-d was able to dissuade him of his aversion by telling Moshe Rabbeinu about a journey to a land flowing with milk and honey as well as assuring him that the nation would believe in him. (Clearly, after the incident in Kush, Moshe had seen that a nation could initially believe and trust a leader and yet with time see it erode into the abyss.)

What was it that G-d said that had the ability to persuade and dissuade Moshe away from his negative response and transform him into the reluctant hero that he became? Why was this nation, Amcha Beis Yisroel, cause for deeper concern than the nation of Kush?

There *was* something unique about Moshe’s mission and leadership. Something, that when looking at history, we find he was the only one to have had the distinctive position of.

Every leader is a leader by default, a de facto charge over a people: one becomes a leader of ***a land mass, a country***, and, by a “Kinyan Agav”, thereby acquires the responsibility for the people within said land as well. Clearly, then, it is the *people, the land*, that holds the power, for *it* shall always remain, leaders, conversely, *are* replaceable. Moshe, after 40 years of such leadership, understood that he did not have the *political* skills, the power to manipulate through words (“I am not a man of words”), to be able to *maintain* leadership – he would not dare put himself in a position of Chanipha and Yerida, having to sacrifice for a vote, ever again³.

² One may feel inclined to suggest that, on the contrary, it is perhaps *easier* to understand then why Moshe was so reluctant to take the mantle of leadership when asked by G-d. He was *not* just a simple, he was *not* a shy Shepard, who, through inexperience and fragility, felt unready for leadership, rather, he was a *worn out leader*, cynical about the prospects of assuming a position of power.

³ Indeed, as the Yalkut ad loc. relates, it was Moshe’s steadfastness in his morals that led to his downfall (he would not be intimate with the queen, the daughter of King Kukunas which caused her to spread lies about his character – interesting how Yoseph lost control under the exact same scenario, see Davarim Shavvim Chelek 2, Sefer Shmos, by this author., briefly:

What G-d had informed Moshe was that he will be the first and only leader to lead - not over a land rather a nation. Indeed, in Moshe's time, after the exodus, the Jews never had a land; they traveled from place to place never resting in comfort. *Moshe led a people, not a country; a nation, not a geographical local.*

Moshe was to be the only mainstay throughout all the Massoas, and indeed, when they did acquire the Land, the land of milk and honey, it was no longer within Moshe's mission to lead them. This was the promise of G-d to Moshe: *true* leadership, over a people, a Law, a Torah, a philosophy, which shall transcend borders, tear down barriers and that knows no boundaries.

It was the leadership that we all would soon be charged with at Sinai: "...Uvalechtecha BaDerech...". We were taught this Torah – a Law that has no perimeter to its jurisdiction, by a man who had no boundaries to his rulership.

This week, the number one book on the New York Times bestseller list is an autobiography written by a comedian⁴. In one starred review the writer relates a passage in the book, where the author writes how on one night, when he was still a nobody, he was performing his act, and at the end of the show, instead of saying, "Thank you and good night", he instead said, "come with me". The audience followed him outside and they preceded to walk through the neighborhood while he had humorous back and forths with pedestrians and entertaining dialogue with the audience. It was at this moment, and

Both were taken in by non-Jews at a young age (although Moshe was an infant, the Pasuk makes the point of calling him "נער", also the word טוב used to describe Moshe at this age has the Gematria of 17 the same age as Yoseph when he left): when Moshe was put in the "Tevah" we are taught in Sotah 12a that the pitch was not smeared on the inside so as not to give off a foul smell to the baby, similarly, at the moment of Yoseph's sale we are taught, both in verse and in Rabbinic literature, how the caravan had a pleasant smell so Yoseph would not needlessly be forced to sit through a foul odor during his long journey; both were leaders of foreign nations- Yoseph of Egypt and Moshe of Kush (see Yalkut Shimoni #168 and Divrei Hayamim); both married daughters of a "Kohain" - Yoseph of On and Moshe of Midian; both had 2 sons in their respective exiles; both were given names by their Egyptian care-takers, indeed the Ramban, in 41:45, suggests that Tzpanas Poneach was a Hebrew name given in Yoseph's vernacular as a sign of respect, similarly, the Ramban continues, Moshe was given a Hebrew name as a sign of respect for this new infant {there are many views regarding these two names, its meaning and language, however, what we do see from the Ramban and others is that they are both connected}; see Rashi to 2/11 that Moshe was made in charge of Pharaoh's house, like Yoseph over the house of Potiphar; Yalkut Shimoni ad loc. that Moshe too lost his leadership position because of a false charge over allegations between him and the wife of a leader; see Shmos 2/20 where Yisro uses the term "bread" to mean wife, like Potiphar did in regard to Yoseph.

⁴ Born Standing Up

through this part of his act –which became a mainstay and the strongest draw- that ascended him to stardom.

Our religion is not restricted to a Beis Haknesses or a Beis Medrash. It does not become more important when we are being watched or more serious when we will be caught. It is a teaching and a culture that knows no confinement.

As we were born as a nation, G-d, in His infinite wisdom saw to it that this message will be with us from the moment we leave Egypt until we arrive in our Land. Knowing that with a land can come the great risk of a sense of entitlement and the confidence in national power without steady national leadership, He, therefore, taught us how to follow and lead within the confines of brotherhood and text, not territorial control nor political expedience.

There is but one other leader who will be given such an inimitable role of un-bordered leadership.

The Moshiach.

However there is one difference: Moshiach, after he leads and gathers from throughout the four corners of the earth, will indeed be allowed entrance into Israel as well, and, for the first time, we will be lead by our liberator from bondage in the Land of our Fathers.

May we see that Day soon.

Pasrshas Shmos *Rabbis Without Borders*

A GOOD STORY NEEDS A BEGINNING, A MIDDLE AND AN END... BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.

The news this week of the assassination of a beloved leader in a volatile region has forced many of us to brush up on our knowledge of the history of Pakistan. The story of a leader exiled, and, then returning, at great risk; the concept of a “Ku...” by a general who still sits in power; the notion of killing the former when she is no longer in power – all of this should not be new to us, and indeed, when we touch up on our history of, LaHavdil, Moshe Rabeinu this week, we should be struck by the similarity present history shares with Midrashik record.

There is a glaring mystery regarding the missing years of Moshe’s life: the Torah informs us of Moshe’s running away at the tender age of 18 (some say 17, others 20) and, in that very same Pasuk, we are told of his settling in Midian. What, if anything, happened in-between? Did Moshe return to Egypt to save the Jews at such a young age? Surely, if he died at 120, and we know the Makkos only lasted for about one year and the sojourn in the wilderness was for 40 years, then, Moshe should have been close 80 upon his return!

The Yalkut Shimoni (# 168), in an unattributed entry brings the following Midrash¹:

There was a land, Kush, whose king, Kokenus, was busy at war with the Bnei Kedem. Billam, who had recently fled Egypt, was able to incite the populace to revolt against the king while he fought at battle. Upon his return the king saw that the walls had been fortified on all sides and that Billam had succeeded in a Ku. As the king began to set up residence with his army just outside the now fortified capitol, a young man, Moshe, arrives after escaping death at the hands of Pharaoh. Moshe eventually succeeds in leading an invasion to take back Kush and they made Moshe the new king (Kukenus had died 9 years after Billam’s revolt). Unfortunately, after 40 years of loyal leadership,

¹ The Ramban who asks our questions, clearly did not have this Midrash, or perhaps did but did not feel it to be following simple Pshat, and had a different understanding of certain Pesukim in Divrei HaYamin.

Moshe was removed from his post and although many wanted him dead he was spared. It was then that he arrived in Midian.

Now, if Moshe was willing to lead Kush, if he was able to balance humility with an acknowledgment of his talents, if he was able to successfully guide *that* nation to tremendous victory, then, why would he be so disinclined, indeed averse, when approached to lead the Jewish people?

It would seem that statements like, “...*who am I...*”(3:11) and “...*I am not a man of words...*”(4:10) are beyond disingenuous considering his past triumphs and accomplishments².

Yet G-d was able to dissuade him of his aversion by telling Moshe Rabbeinu about a journey to a land flowing with milk and honey as well as assuring him that the nation would believe in him. (Clearly, after the incident in Kush, Moshe had seen that a nation could initially believe and trust a leader and yet with time see it erode into the abyss.)

What was it that G-d said that had the ability to persuade and dissuade Moshe away from his negative response and transform him into the reluctant hero that he became? Why was this nation, Amcha Beis Yisroel, cause for deeper concern than the nation of Kush?

There *was* something unique about Moshe’s mission and leadership. Something, that when looking at history, we find he was the only one to have had the distinctive position of.

Every leader is a leader by default, a de facto charge over a people: one becomes a leader of ***a land mass, a country***, and, by a “Kinyan Agav”, thereby acquires the responsibility for the people within said land as well. Clearly, then, it is the *people, the land*, that holds the power, for *it* shall always remain, leaders, conversely, *are* replaceable. Moshe, after 40 years of such leadership, understood that he did not have the *political* skills, the power to manipulate through words (“I am not a man of words”), to be able to *maintain* leadership – he would not dare put himself in a position of Chanipha and Yerida, having to sacrifice for a vote, ever again³.

² One may feel inclined to suggest that, on the contrary, it is perhaps *easier* to understand then why Moshe was so reluctant to take the mantle of leadership when asked by G-d. He was *not* just a simple, he was *not* a shy Shepard, who, through inexperience and fragility, felt unready for leadership, rather, he was a *worn out leader*, cynical about the prospects of assuming a position of power.

³ Indeed, as the Yalkut ad loc. relates, it was Moshe’s steadfastness in his morals that led to his downfall (he would not be intimate with the queen, the daughter of King Kukunas which caused her to spread lies about his character – interesting how Yoseph lost control under the exact same scenario, see Davarim Shavvim Chelek 2, Sefer Shmos, by this author., briefly:

What G-d had informed Moshe was that he will be the first and only leader to lead - not over a land rather a nation. Indeed, in Moshe's time, after the exodus, the Jews never had a land; they traveled from place to place never resting in comfort. *Moshe led a people, not a country; a nation, not a geographical local.*

Moshe was to be the only mainstay throughout all the Massoas, and indeed, when they did acquire the Land, the land of milk and honey, it was no longer within Moshe's mission to lead them. This was the promise of G-d to Moshe: *true* leadership, over a people, a Law, a Torah, a philosophy, which shall transcend borders, tear down barriers and that knows no boundaries.

It was the leadership that we all would soon be charged with at Sinai: "...Uvalechtecha BaDerech...". We were taught this Torah – a Law that has no perimeter to its jurisdiction, by a man who had no boundaries to his rulership.

This week, the number one book on the New York Times bestseller list is an autobiography written by a comedian⁴. In one starred review the writer relates a passage in the book, where the author writes how on one night, when he was still a nobody, he was performing his act, and at the end of the show, instead of saying, "Thank you and good night", he instead said, "come with me". The audience followed him outside and they preceded to walk through the neighborhood while he had humorous back and forths with pedestrians and entertaining dialogue with the audience. It was at this moment, and

Both were taken in by non-Jews at a young age (although Moshe was an infant, the Pasuk makes the point of calling him "נער", also the word טוב used to describe Moshe at this age has the Gematria of 17 the same age as Yoseph when he left): when Moshe was put in the "Tevah" we are taught in Sotah 12a that the pitch was not smeared on the inside so as not to give off a foul smell to the baby, similarly, at the moment of Yoseph's sale we are taught, both in verse and in Rabbinic literature, how the caravan had a pleasant smell so Yoseph would not needlessly be forced to sit through a foul odor during his long journey; both were leaders of foreign nations- Yoseph of Egypt and Moshe of Kush (see Yalkut Shimoni #168 and Divrei Hayamim); both married daughters of a "Kohain" - Yoseph of On and Moshe of Midian; both had 2 sons in their respective exiles; both were given names by their Egyptian care-takers, indeed the Ramban, in 41:45, suggests that Tzpanas Poneach was a Hebrew name given in Yoseph's vernacular as a sign of respect, similarly, the Ramban continues, Moshe was given a Hebrew name as a sign of respect for this new infant {there are many views regarding these two names, its meaning and language, however, what we do see from the Ramban and others is that they are both connected}; see Rashi to 2/11 that Moshe was made in charge of Pharaoh's house, like Yoseph over the house of Potiphar; Yalkut Shimoni ad loc. that Moshe too lost his leadership position because of a false charge over allegations between him and the wife of a leader; see Shmos 2/20 where Yisro uses the term "bread" to mean wife, like Potiphar did in regard to Yoseph.

⁴ Born Standing Up

through this part of his act –which became a mainstay and the strongest draw- that ascended him to stardom.

Our religion is not restricted to a Beis Haknesses or a Beis Medrash. It does not become more important when we are being watched or more serious when we will be caught. It is a teaching and a culture that knows no confinement.

As we were born as a nation, G-d, in His infinite wisdom saw to it that this message will be with us from the moment we leave Egypt until we arrive in our Land. Knowing that with a land can come the great risk of a sense of entitlement and the confidence in national power without steady national leadership, He, therefore, taught us how to follow and lead within the confines of brotherhood and text, not territorial control nor political expedience.

There is but one other leader who will be given such an inimitable role of un-bordered leadership.

The Moshiach.

However there is one difference: Moshiach, after he leads and gathers from throughout the four corners of the earth, will indeed be allowed entrance into Israel as well, and, for the first time, we will be lead by our liberator from bondage in the Land of our Fathers.

May we see that Day soon.