



Parashat Shemot - #312

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On the Parashah I Come From Eretz Yisrael!

"An Egyptian man saved us from the shepherds, and he even drew water for us and watered the sheep" (Shemot 2:19)

Moshe Rabbenu looked like an Egyptian. He dressed like an Egyptian, had an Egyptian haircut, an Egyptian beard and an Egyptian accent. He looked like an Egyptian from head to toe. Because of this, our Rabbis expressed somewhat of a criticism of him. They state (Devarim Rabbah 2:8): "One who identifies with his Land will be buried in the Land, and one who does not identify with his Land will not be buried there." Yosef identified with the Land when he said: "For indeed I was kidnapped from the Land of the Hebrews" (40:15), and he was therefore buried in Shechem. But Moshe Rabbenu did not acknowledge the Land. When Yitro's daughters say to their father: "An Egyptian man saved us from the shepherds," Moshe heard himself being referred to as an Egyptian and kept quiet. Based on this, our Sages conclude that because Moshe did not identify with the Land, he did not merit being buried there.

Rabbi Meir Yechiel of Ostrovta, one of the great Chasidic Rebbes in Poland, asked this question: what did they want from Moshe Rabbenu? Yosef saying that he was from Eretz Yisrael made perfect sense: he was raised there. But Moshe was born and raised in Egypt! Was he expected to lie and say he was from Eretz Yisrael? His answer: Every Jew is obligated to see him or herself as an Israeli. Even if he was born elsewhere – by historical error - he nonetheless belongs to the Land of Israel. A Jew should always say: **I come from Eretz Yisrael!** Rabbi Moshe from Kutzi, the author of the "Semag" and one of the Tosafot, would sign his name: "Moshe from the Exile of Jerusalem who is in France." It is true that I am in France, but I am from Jerusalem. When a Jew is asked: "Where are you from," he must therefore respond: **I come from Eretz Yisrael.**

I was once invited to a Brit Milah. When we sat down to eat, a man quickly ran into the hall and said: "When is the Brit Milah?" The participants told him: "It just ended. Mazel Tov!" He took a deep breath: "Oy vey, I missed it!" He sat down at the meal. I was sitting nearby and overheard his conversation with the others.

- They asked him: "Where are you from?"
- He said proudly with a German accent: "From Frankfurt am Main!"
- I thought to myself: Poor guy, he came all the way from Frankfurt am Main to the Brit Milah and missed it by a few minutes... Everyone felt sorry for him.
- They asked: "What kind of work do you do?"
- He said: "I sell Sifrei Kodesh (holy books)."
- "In Frankfurt am Main?"
- "No, no. In Bayit Ve-Gan (a Jerusalem neighborhood)."
- ????
- "I live in Bayit Ve-Gan."
- "Didn't you just say that you are from Frankfurt am Main?"
- "Yes, yes. I live in Bayit Ve-Gan but **I am from Frankfurt am Main!**"...

He may live in Bayit Ve-Gan, but where is he really from? Frankfurt am Main! He breathes Frankfurt am Main, thinks about Frankfurt am Main and lives Frankfurt am Main. This is how German Jews felt right before the Holocaust.

Rav Aviner on...

Don't Be Corrupt

The International Corruption Perceptions Index of 2013 (according to their counting) was just published. Our standing is not stellar. Out of 177 countries, the State of Israel placed 36th, i.e. there are 35 countries more ethical than we are.

The definition of corruption is "the misuse of public power for private benefit", or in the words of the prophet Yeshayahu (1:23): "Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves, every one loves bribes, and pursues rewards", or in the words of Pirkei Avot (2:3): Be cautious with authorities, for they bring a person close only for their own purpose, appearing as friends when they stand to profit, but not standing by one at his time of need."

The highest ranked country is Denmark, then New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, Holland, Australia and Canada. Germany places 18th, USA – 19th, France – 22nd, United Arab Emirates – 26th, Qatar -29th and us – 36th.

Although we were in 39th place last year and therefore moved up, this is no consolation since we have fallen significantly over the years. In 1996, we were in 14th place, '97 – 15th, '98 – 19th, '99 – 20th, and so on.

As is known, 2000 years ago we lost our national independence and were exiled on account of corruption between one person and another. Baruch Hashem we have been

redeemed, which is a sign that our integrity has returned. It is forbidden for us, however, to fall asleep while on guard. When we see our leaders taking advantage of their authority in an improper manner, we are obligated to rebuke them, even if we believe that their actions are furthering our ideals. The goals do not justify the means. One does not fulfill a Mitzvah through a transgression.

"And what does Hashem require of you? To act justly, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your G-d" (Michah 6:8).

Truth or Superstition?

Invalid Ketubah

Q: Is it possible that we do not have Shalom Bayit and do not have children because we have an invalid Ketubah?

A: There is no ancient source for this. It is necessary, however to have a Kosher Ketubah according to the Halachah (see Shut Mishneh Halachot 14:86).

Interlaced Hands

Q: Do interlaced hands impede the abundance of luck descending onto a person?

A: Nonsense. There are some who refrain from interlacing fingers based on Kabbalah. Zohar, Vayikra 24:1. But this is not found in the Halachah. According to the Halachah, one should refrain from interlacing their fingers during the Shemoneh Esrei. Taz, Orach Chaim 95:1. Aruch Ha-Shulchan ibid. #7 (and see Ta'amei Ha-Minhagim, Likutim #24. Ben Ish Chai, Pinchas #18. Kaf Ha-Chaim, Orach Chaim 91:28. Shemirat Ha-Guf Ve-H-Nefesh 78:1. Piskei Teshuvot 95:5. And see Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv who interlaced his fingers when meeting with the Tzanz-Klausenberger Rebbe: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dKkwC2YiOw>).

Groom's Challah

Q: What is the source that it is a Segulah for finding a match if one eats from the Challah on which a groom recites the blessing?

A: There is no source.

Segulah for a Happy Marriage

Q: Baruch Hashem, I am getting married. Is there a Segulah for a happy marriage?

A: To repent and learn Mesilat Yesharim (And so too Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi in Shut Doresh Tzion: To completely repent and establish fixed times for Torah learning after the wedding).

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