



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Andrew Rose



This week's parsha is parshat *Shmot*, in which we find *Bnei Yisrael* descending to Egypt, and subsequently subjugated as a new king comes to power. After years of degradation and enslavement, G-d "hears their [the Jews'] moaning, and remembered His covenant...G-d saw the Children of Israel; and G-d knew" (Exodus 2:23-24). From there, G-d chooses *Moshe Rabeinu* to lead the Jewish people out of exile into the promised land, and for 39 verses attempts to convince Moses to be the leader.

The **Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Lyadi**, the first *Rebbe* of the Chabad Chassidim once remarked, "A Jew should live with the times," meaning that we should study the weekly *parsha*, for the themes found within it are paralleled to our lives at the same time. Therefore, we can see the clear correlation between this *parsha* and our lives today.

Parshat Shmot, which speaks about the beginning of the redemption of the Jewish people, has **two** instances that hint at the final *Geula* (redemption) we shall soon merit to see, G-d willing, along with the idea of *Moshiach*.

In Exodus 4:13, G-d is in the midst of convincing Moses to redeem the Jewish people, and Moses continues to refuse the offer. As the conversation continues, Moses begs G-d, "Send please, my Lord, by the hand of whom You will send" (Exodus 4:13). As Rav Binny teaches us, the first step to learning Torah is to find "*pshat*," the plain, simplest meaning of the text. Here it seems the Moses is requesting that G-d choose his brother Aaron as the redeemer, not Moses himself. However, the **Vilna Gaon** wrote in his Siddur, "To find *pshat*, one must first learn '*sod*' (the secret esoteric meaning of the text)."

The *Midrash (Lekach Tov)*, explains the verse as follows: *Moshe*, in his plea to G-d, said "Master of the Universe, 'Send please, my Lord, by the hand of whom You will send' –by the hand of *Moshiach* who will be the future redeemer." The *Midrash* expounds that the request was denied; for it was specifically *Moshe* whom Hashem chose to lead the Jewish people.

The **Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson**, takes note of this explanation, but finds a difficulty. In *Shmot Rabbah*, another *Midrashic* work, the Rabbis explain, "Moses was the first and he will be the last redeemer"

(*Shmot Rabbah*, 2:4, *Zohar* I, 253a). He explains that since *Moshe* was a Levite, and *Moshiach* is from the lineage of David, it does not mean that it is the same person, rather *Moshiach* will embody the character of Moses, and from Moses will he receive his redemptive power.

Furthermore, in *Tanya*, the foundation of *Chabad Chassidus*, we find that the verse, "And the scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh come (*Bereishit* 49:10)," also refers to the days of *Moshiach*, for "until Shiloh come," and "*Moshiach*," share the same numerical value of their Hebrew letters (equaling 358). Also, *Tanya* points out, the words "Shiloh" and "Moses" are also equal, totaling 345, and "come" has the same value as the word "one" (13). Thus through complicated mathematical properties, we find that "*Moshiach* = Moses + One," which the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** explains to mean that "*Moshiach* will be brought by service which has the attribute of 'Oneness'; and the power to achieve this is transmitted through *Moshe*" (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 11, pp. 10), that we the Jewish people, can bring *Moshiach*, by following *Moshe Rabeinu's* instruction (i.e. keeping Torah and *Mitzvos*), we become refined individuals able to recognize the G-dliness in every detail and situation.

After *Moshe* accepts the task of being the Deliverer of the Jewish people, we find another hint to *Moshiach*, as he prepares to leave for Egypt. "So Moses took his wife and sons, mounted them on *the* donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt" (Exodus 4:20). **Rashi** notes the "The" before donkey, and quotes *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, which highlights this donkey as a special one, the donkey that Avraham Avinu rode, as well as the one that *Moshiach* will ride. Whether or not this is straight truth, as we learn here at Orayta, is less important than the deeper meaning behind it. **Rabbi Yehuda Lowe**, the **Maharal of Prague**, famous for being a tremendous Torah Sage as well as making the "*Golem*," explains in his work *Gur Aryeh* that mounting the donkey has a much more profound meaning. "*Chamor*" in Hebrew, meaning "donkey," comes from the same root as the word "*Chomer*," meaning material. The **Maharal** teaches us that the special characteristic shared by Avraham Avinu, *Moshe Rabeinu*, and *Moshiach* is their ability to transcend and overcome the limitations of the physical world, and are able to expose G-dliness in the most lacking places.

G-d, however, did not reserve this right just for these three individuals. We all have within us, as it explains in *Tanya*, a pure spark of G-d from above, which comprises our soul. When we connect to our true self, as Rabbi Aaron teaches us, we fulfill our true purpose of existence, and make G-d a true part of our lives. By transcending the material in our lives, and recognizing the true essence and "oneness" behind everything, we refine ourselves, making the world around us a purer, healthier place.

May we all continue to persevere through the final days of exile, and build our relationship with G-d by acknowledging his presence in our lives' and develop our ability to purify the world around us, in order that we merit to see *Moshiach* speedily in our days, G-d willing.

Drew attended the Jewish Community High School of the Bay in San Francisco. He was the Captain of the School Golf Team. Drew was also very active in the San Francisco Chabad. He helped organize the annual Puirm concert and he helped raise tzedaka funds for the local Jewish Community.

The thing he likes best at Orayta is: "Rav Noam's Gemara Shiurim. I also find that learning with my Orayta Rabbinic Fellow allows me to learn the Torah subjects that I choose and helps me grow at my own pace."

After attending Orayta, Drew is planning on attending Northeastern University.