

## Parshat Sh'mot, 5781 – Exodus 2:11-3:1

וַיְהִי | בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־אֶחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסַבְלָתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם מַכֶּה אִישׁ־עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו : וַיִּפּוּ כֹה וְכֹה וַיֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּדֹּף אֶת־הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַּחֹל: וַיֵּצֵא בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁנַיִ וְהִנֵּה שְׁנַיִם־אֲנָשִׁים עִבְרִים נֹצִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָרֹשֶׁע לָמָּה תִּכֶּה רֵעֶד: וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שְׁמִי לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשֹׁפֵט עָלֵינוּ הֲלֹהֶרְגְנִי אַתָּה אֹמֵר כַּאֲשֶׁר הִרְגַּת אֶת־הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן נוֹדַע הַדָּבָר: וַיִּשְׁמַע פְּרַעֲה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ לַהֲרֹג אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פְרַעֲה וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־מִדְיָן וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־הַבְּאֵר:

**2:11-15** Some time after that, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. He turned this way and that and, seeing no one about, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

When he went out the next day, he found two Hebrews fighting; so he said to the offender, “Why do you strike your fellow?”

He retorted, “Who made you chief and ruler over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?”

Moses was frightened, and thought: Then the matter is known!

When Pharaoh learned of the matter, he sought to kill Moses; but Moses fled from Pharaoh. He arrived in the land of Midian, and sat down beside a well.

### a) Midrash Sh'mot Rabbah 1:32

[The Egyptian] was certainly deserving of death as it is written, “one who kills a human shall be put to death” (Lev. 24:21).

Moreover, it was because [this same Egyptian] had committed adultery with Dotan’s wife, and for that reason deserved to die, as it is written, “the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death” (Lev. 20:10).

So it says “He turned this way and that” it means that he saw both what [the Egyptian] did in [Dotan’s] house and in the field.

### b) Midrash Shmot Rabbah 1:33

“He turned this way and that” – he saw that there would be no hope of righteous descendants from this man, and none from any of his children, until the end of time.

### c) The Chronicles of Moses (Otzar Hamidrashim p.356)

God said to Moses, “Did I tell you to go and kill the Egyptian?!”

Moses answered, “Why, You killed all of the Egyptian first born, and I am to die over one Egyptian?!”

To which God responded, “And are you, like Me, able to both kill and give life?! Are you, like Me, able to bring [the dead] back to life?!”

וּלְכַתּוּ מִדְיָן שִׁבְעַ בָּנוֹת וַתִּבְאֵנָה וַתִּדְלְקֵנָה וַתִּמְלֹאנָה אֶת־הַרְהָטִים לְהַשְׁקוֹת צֹאן אֲבֵיהֶן: וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרָעִים וַיִּגְרְשׁוּם וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה וַיּוֹשְׁעֵן וַיִּשְׁקוּ אֶת־צֹאנָם: וַתִּבְאֵנָה אֶל־רְעוּאֵל אֲבֵיהֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מִדּוּעַ מֵהֲרַתָּן בָּא הַיּוֹם: וַתֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם הִצִּילָנוּ מִיַּד הָרָעִים וְגַם־דָּלָה דָּלָה לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאן: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־בְּנֹתָיו וַאֲיֹ לָמָּה זֶה עֲזַבְתֶּן אֶת־הָאִישׁ קִרְיָן לוֹ וַיֹּאכַל לָחֶם: וַיּוֹאֵל מֹשֶׁה לְשִׁבְתָּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־צִפְרָה בִּתּוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה: וַתֵּלֶד בּוֹ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גֵּרְשֹׁם כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נֹכְרִיָּה:

**2:16-22** Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock; but shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock.

When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come back so soon today?”

# OR HAMIDBAR

SPIRITUAL JUDAISM IN THE DESERT

They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock."

He said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why did you leave the man? Ask him in to break bread."

Moses consented to stay with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah as wife.

She bore a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

## Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael, Yitro 1, p.189

Yitro had seven names: Yeter, Yitro, Hovav, Reu'el, Hever, Putiel, Keni.

Yeter — he added (yiter) a section in the Torah;

Yitro — he was "abundant" (yiter) in good deeds.

Hovav — he was beloved (hovev) by the Lord.

Reu'el — he was a "friend" (re'a) to the Lord.

Hever — he was a "companion" (haver) to the Lord.

Putiel — he "weaned himself" (niftar) from idolatry.

Keni — he was zealous (kinei) for Heaven and he acquired (kanah) Torah.

## Targum Yonatan

*u'l'onis d'midian* ולאוניס דמדין = ולכהן מדין

*Onis>tyranis>leader/ruler*

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבָדָה וַיִּזְעְקוּ וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבָדָה: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּדַע אֱלֹהִים: וּמִשָּׁה הָיָה רָעָה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתְנֵוֹ כִּהְיוּ מִדְּיָן וַיִּנְהַג אֶת־הַצֹּאן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָר הָאֱלֹהִים חֹרֵבָה:

**2:23-3:1** A long time after that, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites were groaning under the bondage and cried out; and their cry for help from the bondage rose up to God.

God heard their moaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.

Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

## Midrash Tanchuma, Shemot 7:1

"Now Moses, tending the flock ..." (Exod. 3:1) - Scripture states elsewhere: "Every word of God is tried; God is a shield unto them that take refuge in God" (Prov. 30:5).

The Holy One, does not confer greatness upon a person until testing them in lesser things. Only then is that person elevated to greatness. Two great men in the world were tested and found to be faithful before God raised them to positions of greatness.

God tested David by means of a sheep.

What did David do? He led the sheep into the desert to keep them from feeding from the field of others, and that is why his brother Eliab said to him: "With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness"? (I Sam. 17:28).

The Holy One said to him: You have been found trustworthy with regard to sheep, and so now I shall entrust My flock to you that you may shepherd them, as it is written: "You shall shepherd My people Israel" (I Chron. 11:2). And Scripture likewise says: "From following the ewes that give suck God brought him to be shepherd over Jacob, God's people, and Israel, God's inheritance (Ps. 78:71).