

פרשת

שמות

Parashat Shemot

*Shemot / Exodus 1:1-6:1, Isaiah 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23
Luke 5:12-39*

The Pretense of Halfheartedness

In this week's Torah portion, Parashat Shemot, we read that a new king raised up in Egypt and placed Israel into slavery being afraid because of Her large numbers. We also read how the Lord raised up a deliverer, one who will take Israel out of bondage and slavery. Based upon this week's reading, and upon the deliverer / redeemer narratives, we are given the themes of sin and redemption coupled to God's Torah as a way of life. The Lord God told His people in relation to the Mitzvot saying, *Bamidbar / Numbers 32:23* וְאִם-לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן כִּן הִנֵּה חַטָּאתְכֶם לִיהוָה *But if you do not do so, you will have sinned against the LORD; and know that your sin will find you. (NASB)* This phrase "*and know that your sin will find you*" (וְדַעוּ חַטָּאתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר) (תִּמְצָא אֶתְכֶם) is one of the most important and misunderstood statements in all God's Word. Here Moshe is speaking of one particular aspect of sin, that of having a stubborn heart coupled with a refusal to wholly follow the Lord! There are many sins that go unexposed here on earth and will be revealed only at the Judgment (*Luke 12:3, Matthew 10:27*). Rambam on *Bereshit / Genesis 1:1 Part 1* sates the following, "*the story of the whole topic of creation until the creation of Adam, and that He made him ruler over the work of His hands and all that was giv-*

en over beneath his feet, and the Garden of Eden - which is the best of all the places created in this world - became established for his dwelling, until his sin drove him from there. And the people of the generation of the Deluge, by their sin were driven from the entire world, and the righteous one among them alone was spared, him and his sons. And their descendants, their sin caused them to be scattered in places and planted in lands, and they captured for themselves the places according to their families among their peoples, as the opportunities arose to them. If so, it is appropriate that when a people continues to sin, it will be destroyed from its place and another people will inherit his land, for this is the law of God in the world from always.” In relation to what Rambam is saying, the peoples were dispersed across the face of the earth due to their sin, unfaithfulness, and rebellion against wholly following in the ways of God. Those who do these things are condemned in the midst of a righteous, holy, and just God. This condemnation will be known by all peoples because these wicked men were known by the extent of their wickedness and sin. All will know the reasons why the sinner is eternally condemned. This is the source text for the Apostle Paul’s interpretation saying, *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of man by Jesus Christ according to my gospel”* (Romans 2:16, *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ*). The Greek word used here κρυπτὰ (krupta) for secrets is defined as, *“that which is hidden, concealed, or covered up.”* For example, the one who looks at pornography may hide his sin until caught, or as in the case for the adulterer, until judgment day. The thief may cover up his crimes and may not get caught in this life, and the wicked heart or evil thoughts may remain unexposed before men. Even hypocrisy may be hidden for years under a pretense of piety. But as it is described in *Bamidbar / Numbers 32:23* the sin of halfheartedness will always find you out here and now because the Lord God of Israel is watching! This pretense of *“halfheartedness”* is found under the idea that one has not been found out yet. The important *“Torah context”* in relation to these things from Parashat Shemot, is that Moshe also had this pretense believing his sins had not found him out. When Moshe killed the Egyptian, he thought nobody was watching. The Lord God of Israel however was watching, He was present. We learn that his sin did find him out and someone was watching. When

Moshe was tending his flock on the Mountain of the Lord, again he did not realize the Lord was present until the Lord revealed Himself. The point is regardless of whether someone else sees our sins, *“be sure that your sins will find you out,”* because the Lord is watching! This should lead us to live a repentant lifestyle coupled to our faith in Yeshua the Messiah! Let’s discuss this further in this week’s study.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 2:11-15*:

Shemot / Exodus 2:11-15

2:10 The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, ‘Because I drew him out of the water.’

2:11 Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 2:12 So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 2:13 He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, ‘Why are you striking your companion?’ 2:14 But he said, ‘Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ Then Moses was afraid and said, ‘Surely the matter has become known.’ 2:15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well. (NASB)

י וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּבִאֶהוּ לְבַת-פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי-לָהּ לְבֵן וַתִּקְרָא
שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן-הַמַּיִם מְשִׁיתֶהוּ: [שלישי] יא וַיְהִי
| בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אֶחָיו וַיִּרְא בְּסִבְלֹתָם וַיִּרְא
אִישׁ מִצְרִי מִכֹּה אִישׁ-עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו: יב וַיִּפֶן כֹּה וְכֹה וַיִּרְא
כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּךְ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּטְמְנֶהוּ בַּחֹל: יג וַיֵּצֵא בַּיּוֹם
הַשֵּׁנִי וְהָיָה שְׁנֵי-אֲנָשִׁים עִבְרִים נֹצְרִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְרָשָׁע לָמָּה תִּכֶּה
רַעְדָּ: יד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שְׂמָךְ לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשִׁפְט עָלֵינוּ הֲלִהְרַגְנִי

אָתָּה אָמַר כְּאִשֶּׁר הָרַגְתָּ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּירָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֹן
 נֹדַע הַדָּבָר: טו וַיִּשְׁמַע פְּרַעֲזָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ לְהַרְגֹּ
 אֶת-מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פְרַעֲזָה וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ-מִדְיָן וַיֵּשֶׁב
 עַל-הַבְּעָר:

According to the Torah, Moshe hid the body of the Egyptian, but someone was watching. He also knew that he would one day be used by God to deliver His people Israel. This is what had motivated him to strike down the Egyptian and then proceed to mediate between his brethren. When he was found out, he fled to Midian.



Moshe taking matters into his own hands, the Torah states the following, וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שְׂמָךְ לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשִׁפְט עָלֵינוּ הֲלִהְרַגְנִי אָתָּה אָמַר כְּאִשֶּׁר יָד הָרַגְתָּ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּירָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֹן נֹדַע הַדָּבָר: טו וַיִּשְׁמַע פְּרַעֲזָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ לְהַרְגֹּ אֶת-מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פְרַעֲזָה וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ-מִדְיָן וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל-הַבְּעָר: *2:14 But he said, 'Who made you a prince or a judge*

over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ Then Moses was afraid and said, ‘Surely the matter has become known.’ 2:15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well. (NASB) We are told Moshe was afraid for his life of being thought of as a deliverer, so he fled to the land of Midan. In the map (shown above), Moshe made a significant journey to flee from Egypt all the way to Midian. Midan appears to be in the land of modern day Iran.

Note that Moshe knew the purpose of his birth, to deliver His people, but he did not know what the Lord’s timing would be. The rabbis have the following to say concerning Moshe within the context of Parashat Shemot.

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 2:11:1

(11) ויגדל משה AND MOSES WAS GROWN — But has it not already been written, (Exodus 2:10) “And the child grew”? Rabbi Judah the son of Eloai said: the first time it refers to growth in stature, the second time to greatness, — that Pharaoh appointed him to have charge over his palace (Tanchuma Yashan 2.2:17; cf. also Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 166:11). (יא) ויגדל משה, והלא כָּבֵר כָּתוּב וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד? אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בְּרַבִּי אֶלְעָאִי, הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְקוֹמָה וְהַשֵּׁנִי לְגִדּוּלָה, שְׂמִנְהוּ פְרַעֲהוּ עַל בֵּיתוֹ (יל-קוט שמעוני):

Rashi compares the repetition in the Torah text, *2:10 The child grew...* (וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד) to the second mention of his having grown, *2:11 Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up...* (וַיְהִי | בַּיָּמִים) where in the one sense, the child had grown old enough to be given in adoption, and the second time being old enough to be put in charge having authority (greatness). Rashi describes two aspects of Moshe’s life, growing from childhood, maturity, and then responsibility. Rashi goes on to say the following:

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 2:11:2-4

(11) וירא בסבלתם *AND HE SAW THEIR BURDENS — he set his eyes and mind to share in their distress. (Exodus Rabbah 1:27)* (12) איש מצרי *AN EGYPTIAN MAN — This was one of the taskmasters appointed over the Israelite officers and he used to rouse them from their beds at cock-crow that they might proceed to their work (Exodus Rabbah 1:28 and Leviticus Rabbah 32:4).* (13) מכה איש עברי *SMITING A HEBREW MAN — beating and flogging him. The latter was the husband of Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri (see Leviticus 24:11), and the Egyptian taskmaster had set his fancy upon her. During the night he compelled him (her husband) to rise and made him leave the house. He, however, returned, entered the house and forced his attentions upon the woman, she believing it was her husband. The man returned and became aware of what had happened, and when the Egyptian perceived that he was aware of it he beat him and flogged him the whole day long (Exodus Rabbah 1:28).* (יא) וירא בסבלתם. נתן עיניו ולבו להי. (יב) איש מצרי. נוגש הזה ממנה על שוטרי ישראל והיה מעמידם מקרות הגבר למלאכתם (שם): (יג) מכה איש עברי. מלקהו ורודהו. ובעלה של שלומית בת דברי היה ונתן עיניו בה, ובלילה העמידו והוציאו מביתו, והוא חזר ונכנס לבית ובא על אשתו, כסבורה שהוא בעלה, וחזר האיש לביתו והרגיש בדבר, וכשראה אותו מצרי שהרגיש בדבר, היה מכהו ורודהו כל היום (שם):

Rashi provides a reason for why the Egyptian was beating the man and it was due to an act of unrighteousness towards another man's wife. This causes us to see Moshe's actions in a more righteous light. However, the Torah does not provide this context, the assumption is that Moshe did the correct thing by killing the Egyptian. However, If Moshe had thought he was justified in killing the Egyptian, why did he

choose to hide the body?

Rashbam has the following to say concerning this event.

Rashbam on Shemot / Exodus 2:14

(14) הלהרגני אתה אומר?, *because I am striking my fellow ?* (15) כאשר הרגת את המצרי *on account of an Egyptian hitting an Israelite.* (16) וְכֵן, *Moses had come to the realisation that he had been wrong when he buried the Egyptian thinking that no one had observed his death and burial. It turned out that the matter had been witnessed.* (י"ד) הלהרגני אתה אומר - בשביל שאני מכה את חברי. (טו) כאשר הרגת את המצרי - בשביל שהיה מכה איש עברי. (טז) אכן - ואך כן. לא כמו שהייתי סבור (כשטמנתיו בחול שלא נודע, אלא כן הוא שנודע).

Moshe was wrong in burying the Egyptian he had killed because he was attempting to conceal what he did and therefore he knew what he did was a sin.

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 2:13

(13) *TWO MEN OF THE HEBREWS* — viz., *Dathan and Abiram (Nedarim 64b); it was they, too, who left over some of the manna (Exodus Rabbah 1:29).* (14) נצים *means quarelling.* (15) למה תכה *lit., WHEREFORE WILT THOU SMITE* — *Although he had not yet smitten him he is termed here רשע wicked, because he had merely raised his hand against him (Sanhedrin 58b).* (16) רעך *THY FELLOW (the word denotes one who is the equal of another) — who is as wicked as yourself (Exodus Rabbah 1:29).* (יג) שני אנשים עבֵרִים רים. דָּתָן וְאַבְרָם, הֵם נִשְׁהוּתִירוּ מִן הַמָּן (נדריים ס"ד): (יד) נצים. מְרִיבִים: (טו) למה תכה. אַע"פ שְׁלֹא הִפְּהוּ נִקְרָא רִשְׁעָה בְּהִרְמַת יָד (סנהדרין נ"ח): (טז) רעך. רִשְׁעָה כְּמוֹתָהּ: (תנחומא):

Rashi draws a parallel to Parashat Korach and the rebellion that took place in the book of Bamidbar / Numbers where a group of leaders and people questioned the authority of Moshe and Aaron. Note Rashi's commentary on *Shemot / Exodus 2:13* states that quarrelling, smiting another man is termed רשע "wicked" there is no excuse for what Moshe had done. (Moshe was not in an army or at war.)

Parashat Shemot continues in the narrative to state the following:

Shemot / Exodus 3:1-7

3:1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 3:2 The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. 3:3 So Moses said, 'I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.' 3:4 When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' 3:5 Then He said, 'Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' 3:6 He said also, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 3:7 The Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. (NASB)

א ומִשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת-צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתָנוּ כִּהְיוּ מִדְיָן וַיִּגְהַג אֶת-
הַצֹּאן אַחַר הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל-הַר הָאֱלֹהִים חֲרֵבָה: ב וַיִּרְא
מִלְּאֵף יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלִבַּת-אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּנֵּה בֹעֵר
בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינּוּ אֹכֵל: ג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה-נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה
אֶת-הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מֵדַע לֹא-יִבְעַר הַסִּנֵּה: ד וַיִּרְא יְהוָה
כִּי סָר לִרְאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה

מִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הַיְיָ: הֲ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-תִּקְרַב הָלֵם שֶׁל-נִעְזָלֶיךָ
 מֵעַל רִגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדַמַּת-קֹדֶשׁ
 הוּא: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק
 וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתַּר מִשָּׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מִהִבֵּית אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים:
 ז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רְאֵה רְאֵה רְאֵה אֶת-עֵינַי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-
 צַעֲקוֹתָם שָׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נִגְשָׁיו כִּי יִדְעֹתִי אֶת-מִכְאֲבוֹ:

Note earlier in the narrative (*Shemot / Exodus 2:11-15*) when Moshe least suspected, someone was watching. Here in *Shemot / Exodus 3:1-7*, again when Moshe least suspected, the Lord was present. Note how this place is known as “*the mountain of God.*” Is this a pretext or a post text type of context on the description of that place as the mountain of God? Did the people in the region know this to be the mountain of the Lord or was this a result of Moshe having met the Lord and brought Israel to the foot of the mountain? In *Shemot / Exodus 3:10*, this is where the Lord called Moshe to deliver His people, He called him into the ministry. The Lord called Moshe to bring His Gospel Message to the people of Israel and to the world. With these things in mind, how should this cause us to live since our bodies are His Temple? Note how the Lord speaks to sons of Israel in *Shemot / Exodus 25:1-8* to raise a Terumah (תְּרוּמָה, contribution) according to how each persons heart moves them. Note how the rabbinic commentary interprets these verses:

Sefer HaChinuch (16 cent.)

Know, my child, that any commandment that God requires of humankind comes only out of God’s desire to benefit us... God’s command to build the Tabernacle, for us to offer therein our prayers and sacrifices, comes not out of God’s needs to dwell in an earthly dwelling among humankind, but rather [out of God’s awareness that we need] train our own selves.

Malbim (19th cent. Eastern Europe)- Commentary on Exodus 25:8

...Each one of us needs to build God a Tabernacle in the



recesses of our hearts, by preparing oneself to become a Sanctuary for God and a place for the dwelling of God's glory.

The rabbis say that this commandment of God to construct the Tabernacle is for our benefit. How so? So that we could train ourselves to offer prayers, to bring sacrifices, and to be thankful with the sacrifice of praise before the Lord. In the Targum on *Tehillim / Psalms 50*, David says that the Lord does not take bulls out of their flocks because he owns the cattle on a thousand mountains, He does not require sacrifices because He is hungry (*50:8-13*) as compared to the rabbis translation into the Aramaic Targum that speaks of the Lord not rebuking his people because they were unable to offer sacrifices due to the sanctuary being laid waste on the Temple Mount. This describes living in obedience to the word of the Lord with respect to what we are able to do within the context of our bodies being the Temple of the God of Israel. These comments go to show that we are called to obedience, and to have a high regard for God's word in our lives as a sacrifice unto the Lord, similar to what Paul wrote in *Romans 12:1-3*, because these things direct us to God's will and plan which was to bring His Messiah Yeshua into this world for the purpose of salvation from sin. Should we not be diligent in seeking the Lord and waiting for Him to reveal his plan for our lives, and to seek how He will use us in His kingdom? This also provides us with a future expectation for our lives of the Lord's work in our lives. We must be read at all times for a move of God in our lives. This reminds us of something Yeshua said in *Matthew 24:44*. He said that we must be ready at all times, for the Son of Man will come when we least expect. Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you do not expect, the Son of Man. We are warned to be always watching and prepared for the work of the Lord and that we are to maintain this temperment of mind.

Matthew 24:44

24:44 'For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. (NASB, δια τουτο και υμεις γινεσθε ετοιμοι οτι η ωρα ου δοκειτε ο υιος του ανθρωπου ερχεται)

Why does the Lord warn us to be read and of the Son of Man coming at an hour that is unexpected? Matthew said, δια τουτο saying “*in order that,*” as regards to our being similar to the householder spoken of in the parable (see *Matthew 24*), where we might be caught doing something we should not be doing. This is paralleled to the thief who comes to steal. Yeshua said, και υμεις, that if the householder had known he would have been ready had he kept watched. Yeshua’s use of the word “*etoimoi*” ετοιμοι speaks of having a spiritual readiness for the move of God so that it would not take us by surprise (see *Matthew 25:10, Titus 3:1*). This preparedness is something to be acquired for ourselves (γινεσθε), we are to work at patiently waiting upon the Lord and be slow to take matters into our own hands as Moshe did according to Parashat Shemot.

In Parashat Shemot, we get this pretense of “*halfheartedness*” and “*unpreparedness*” that is found under the idea that one is getting away with sin. The important “*Torah context*” in relation to these things from Parashat Shemot, is that the great men of faith, such as Moshe, he too had this pretense believing his sins had not found him out. When Moshe killed the Egyptian, he thought nobody was watching. The Lord God of Israel however was watching, He was present. We learn that his sin did find him out and someone was watching. When Moshe was tending his flock on the Mountain of the Lord, again he did not realize the Lord was present until the Lord revealed Himself. The point is regardless of whether someone else sees our sins, “*be sure that your sins will find you out,*” because the Lord is watching! The point of sin finding us out that is coupled to the Torah context is that of our need for a deliverer and savior. The Torah draws us back to repentance, to return to the ways of God in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. This is the point of the Torah in our lives, to draw us back to the Lord God of Israel, to direct us to His Messiah Yeshua, to have faith in the mercy of God, and to seek the Lord’s ability to create in us a new heart and desire to walk in His ways of righteousness, Justice, and Truth. The Messiah plus the Torah is the gospel message!

