

Parsha Nation

A Weekly Publication of the National Council of Young Israel Achva Youth Department

PARSHAS SHEMOT

Program Guide Breakdown

Parsha Review - Each week group leaders will have the opportunity to roundup the Parsha in two or three paragraphs. By giving over the Parsha in a short and simple way, group participants will be able to grasp the Parsha as a whole and to get them to think globally and conceptually.

Parsha Questions - No Shabbat morning group is complete without a list of Parsha questions. These questions allow group participants the opportunity to win fun prizes while increasing their Torah knowledge. Questions vary from basic understanding of story line to challenging source-based material. The answers are provided as well.

Tefillah Treasure - Many youth directors have asked for help when it comes to teaching Tefillah to children. This is a problem that not only shuls are dealing with. Schools, camps, and youth organizations are having trouble developing creative ideas to help children understand Tefillah. Over the course of the year, this section will highlight one aspect of Davening by providing both the Hebrew and English text, and one explanatory idea. The older the age group, the more we delve into the idea. This section is designed to help group participants follow the flow of Tefillah while understanding what they are saying.

Group Activity - Now the fun begins! We start off with a GOAL. Each game has a purpose. The youth leaders should familiarize themselves with the goal before implementing the game.

Discussion Portion - After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning groups.

Story - Each week we will include a story that addresses a modern day concern with lesson taken from that week's Parsha.

Jewish Leader of the Week - Every week a different Jewish Leader from modern Jewish history will be highlighted. This will allow group participants to expand their knowledge of history and to learn how they can be a Jewish leader in today's society.

Teen Minyan Packet - This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

Leader Tips - Each section has some great tips for leaders and how they should conduct that section.

Faithful to the past. Inspiring the future.

Lesson Plan - Shabbat Morning Groups

Time Duration	Activity	Notes
5 min	Registration	Welcome parents and children in to the group room.
10-35 min	Davening	Depending on your group size and level.
5 min	Introduction to Yearly Theme (Manhigut)	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parsha Review	Prep participants for Parsha questions.
10 min	Parsha Questions	Prizes and awards should also be given out if participants answer correctly
2 min	Understanding the Goal	Leaders should start prepping for Shabbat activity
30 min	Activities	Your choice of two games to play
10 min	Follow Up Discussion	Refer to materials
10 min	Parsha Song	This is for younger groups only.
20 min	Free Game Play	Groups can break for free game play or continue their own programing.
5 min	Story	Assemble in a circle and have participants read sections of the story out loud.
5-10 min	Discussion	Refer to handout
4 min	Jewish Leader of the Week	Refer to handout
4 min	Tefillah Treasures	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parent Pick up/Dismissal	Parents pick up their children.
Total Time:		2 hours & 40 min of programing!

SHEMOT REVIEW

A new Paroh came about and made all of Bnei Yisrael into slaves forcing them to build cities for him. Paroh gathered all the Hebrew midwives and told them to kill all the Hebrew sons that they delivered. The righteous midwives did not listen to Paroh though. Paroh then commanded the Mitzriyim to throw all the newborn males into the Nile.

Moshe was born. His mother Yocheved, who feared for Moshe's life, put him into a waterproofed basket and sent him afloat down the Nile. Paroh's daughter came to the Nile, and took the child as her own. Moshe's sister Miriam, who watched the entire scene, offered Paroh's daughter to bring a Hebrew nursemaid for the child, and when Paroh's daughter agreed to the suggestion, Miriam got Yocheved. Moshe was raised in Paroh's palace.

When he got older, he went out one day and saw a Mitzri hitting a Hebrew. Moshe was so angry that he killed the Mitzri. Paroh heard about what happened and Moshe had to run away. He ran to Midian where he married Tzipporah, the daughter of Yitro. They gave birth to a son, Gershom. Meanwhile, Bnei Yisrael's slavery was getting worse and worse back in Mitzrayim.

Moses was shepherding Yitro's when he saw "The Burning Bush", where a bush was on fire but not being consumed. When he got closer to the bush Hashem called out to him saying that he should take off his shoes since the place he was standing was holy. Hashem gave Moshe specific instructions to go back to Mitzrayim to rescue Bnei Yisrael and bring them to Israel.

Hashem told Moshe that Paroh would not agree to let Bnei Yisrael go but the redemption would come nonetheless, after Hashem strikes the Mitzrim with a strong arm. When Moshe protested that he was not the right person for the job to be Hashem's messenger since he had a lisp, Hashem assigned his brother Aharon to be his spokesperson. Hashem told Moshe to perform three miracles when he goes to Paroh: turn his staff into a snake, his hand would have tzaraat and then be cured, and turn water into blood.

Moshe took his wife and two sons and headed for Mitzrayim. Moshe and Aharon went to Paroh and demanded that he let Bnei Yisrael free. Paroh mocked their request and told the Mitzri to increase Bnei Yisrael's workload. In response to this Hashem began to prepare to show us wrath on Paroh and the Mitzrim.

LEADER TIP: It's a new Sefer and a new story! Have half the group leaders come to groups dressed as Mitzrim and half dressed as Jews in Mitzrayim.

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions:

1. What is this week's Parsha?
2. How were the Jewish people treated after the Shevatim died?
3. What decree did Pharaoh issue against the Jewish baby boys?
4. When Moshe was born, what did Yocheved place Moshe in? Where did Yocheved place him?
5. Who found Moshe floating in a basket and who took Moshe out of the river?
6. Where did Hashem first speak to Moshe?
7. What mission did Hashem give Moshe?
8. Why didn't Moshe want to be the leader?
9. What did Moshe request from Pharaoh?
10. What was Pharaoh's response?

Answers:

1. Shemot.
2. They were enslaved and forced to work hard.
3. To kill all Jewish baby boys, and when the Jewish midwives didn't listen, to drown them.
4. In a basket in the river.
5. Basya the daughter of Pharaoh.
6. At the Sneh (burning bush).
7. To tell Pharaoh to free the Jewish people.
8. He was humble and a stutterer.
9. To free the Jewish people.
10. He refused and he also made the work harder for the Jewish people.

LEADER TIP: Create a fake "Burning Bush" and put it in the room you're in. Make everyone take off their shoes before they come in since the place they are in is holy!

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids about how the Jews felt while they were slaves in Egypt and that when the Jewish people stick together that no one can bring us down.

ACTIVITY:

“Pyramid Challenge”

Split the group up into groups of at least six. Start off the competition by asking each group to get in order of birthday from January to December. Once they accomplish that, have them then get in order of first name alphabetically. Finally, have them get in order of shoe size. If they are younger kids, they may need more assistance so keep an eye out for that. Then give each group a stack of cups and challenge them to make a 10 cup pyramid. Then challenge them to make a human pyramid using six people. Try to keep them working as hard as possible but encourage them to work together.

“Prisoners”

2 teams facing each other, a volunteer goes over to the other team who all have their fists out in front of them. The volunteer taps 3 fists, and the third fist that he taps must chase the volunteer back to his team. If the volunteer gets 'home' first, the chaser becomes his prisoner and must stand behind him until he is 'freed'. If the chaser tags him before they reach the other side the volunteer is the chaser's prisoner. A person is freed, if their captor is chosen to chase and they lose. However, if the captor wins the chase, then the other challenger also becomes their prisoner.

DISCUSSION: The Jewish people became slaves to Paroh and the Egyptians for a very long time and were worked extremely hard. Whatever Paroh wanted was what the Jews had to do, no questions asked. How do you think it feels to be a slave? What does it mean to be a slave? Are there good ways to be a slave or just bad? When we worked in Egypt for Paroh, we couldn't make our own decisions and we had no choice in the matter. We were stuck following a leader who was mean and told us to do things we didn't want to do. We are sometimes even slaves today such as when we get caught up watching TV when we really should be doing homework. We also could be slaves to fitting in with our friends and could sometimes find ourselves doing things we really don't want to do. When we can surround ourselves by good people and good influences we can overcome anything. When the Jewish people stick together, especially under the influence of good leaders and role models, we can accomplish anything. In this Parsha, we learn about being slaves and we learn about Moshe being our leader chosen to help Hashem take us out of slavery. But why Moshe? What made him such a great leader? The Midrash explains why Moshe Rabbeinu was chosen for this task. It tells us that when Moshe, who was the shepherd for Yitro, was out in the wilderness with the flock one little sheep went astray and Moshe went after it to protect it. The sheep had sought water to drink. When Moshe saw this he picked it up and carried it back on his shoulders. Hashem said that if a person can do this for the flock of a man he will certainly do so for the flock of Hashem, the Jewish people. (Shemot Rabbah, 2-2) A glaring question suggests itself. Moshe went to protect one sheep. In doing so, he obviously neglected the entire flock he left behind and endangered their existence. How can he be praised for abandoning the entire flock to save one individual sheep? The answer is simple. One sheep all alone out in the wilderness has no protection. The flock, however, were numerous and if they kept together they would be protected by their mere numbers. The obvious moral message is that there is strength in numbers and we Jews can be strong if we stick together. If Jews are united and not bickering about minutiae they can overcome all the obstacles the world throws in their way of survival.

LEADER TIP: Ask the kids if they ever feel like they're being forced by their friends to do things they don't want to do. Have a discussion about peer pressure and how to beat it.

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: Each of us has inside ourselves the ability to accomplish much more than we realize. Yet sometimes we let our fears and feelings of not being good enough stand in the way. In this week's Parsha, we learn about how Moshe had within him the ability to stand up against the cruel and powerful Paroh, and be the one to lead the entire Jewish people out from miserable slavery to freedom. At first even Moshe didn't realize he could do it. But Hashem encouraged him, and helped him to see his true abilities. Moshe discovered his hidden potential and changed the course of human history. We, too, can learn how to see our true abilities, overcome the feelings that hold us back, and accomplish what we never thought we could.

"OFF THE DEEP END"

It may have only been a 20 meter pool, but to me it looked like the Atlantic Ocean. As I stood there in line watching one kid after another jump in and swim to the other side, I knew only one thing: *I could never do it.*

I had been taking after-school swimming lessons. Everything went along fine at first. I learned to tread water, paddle like a dog, and even to do 'the crawl' stroke. Maybe I couldn't actually *swim*, but now, at least, I could flop around in the water long enough for a lifeboat to arrive. Let the typhoon come; I was ready.

But on the day of the last lesson, Mr. Walder, our instructor, told us that as a final exam we were all going to swim from one end of the pool to the other. I thought he was joking. But when he lined us all up on one side of the big indoor heated pool, I saw he was serious, and I *knew* only one thing - I was in way over my head. Maybe I knew how to tread water well enough to get by in an emergency, but I couldn't actually swim, and certainly not well enough to get across the whole pool!

As we got in line, I was careful to strategically position myself at the end of the line. I figured the hour-long lesson would probably finish well before they reached my turn, and I would be able to quietly return home to life on dry land.

But soon I saw that wasn't going to happen. The line was moving too fast. Somehow the same kids who just a couple of months ago couldn't swim across a bathtub were suddenly gliding across the pool like Olympic stars.

Now there were only two guys ahead of me and I began to panic. Maybe I could pretend I had a cramp, or explain to Mr. Walder how I had to get home early that day to baby-sit for my pet cat. One way or the other I would have to get out of it. After all, there was no way to do the impossible.

Mark, the guy in front of me, jumped in and now it was just the two of us - me and the instructor on one side of the pool, and everyone else on the other. "Okay, Scott, last but not least. Your turn!" called out the man with a smile, his shining whistle dangling on the chain around his neck.

I didn't move. It was embarrassing for sure to just stand there like a zombie, but it sure beat drowning! Mr. Walder came closer and asked, "What's going on, Scotty?"

"I can't do it, Mr. Walder," I answered between clenched teeth. "It's impossible. I can't swim across the pool."

I was afraid he was going to laugh, or start yelling at me. He looked at me, then at the water, shook his head and said, "I know just how you feel."

He did?

"It looks like an awfully long way from this side of the pool. But you know what? You can do it."

I was glad *he* felt that way, but that didn't change the impossible reality. I shook my head tensely. "No, you don't understand. I can't swim. I just can't do it."

"Look Scott," he said patiently. "It might seem like it is beyond you, but I've been watching you during all of these lessons, and I'm telling you, you *can* swim."

I shook my head.

"Scott, you have the tools. You know how to do the crawl stroke, move your arms and kick your feet, right?"

"Yeah, but..."

"And you know how to turn your head and breathe between strokes too, don't you?"

I nodded. It was true, but still...

"Scotty, guess what? That means you *know how to swim!*"

I was about to argue, then I gave his words a second thought. It was true, I could do all the things he mentioned. Did that mean I really could swim after all?

"So what do you say, Scotty?"

"Okay, but swimming across the whole pool? I mean, it's so far."

"It's just one crawl stroke after another. I'll be right there with you. I know you can do it, and I think by now you know it too. Go ahead, jump in and swim!"

I couldn't even believe I was doing it myself, but I asked God to get me across to the other side in one piece, jumped into the water and started doing the strokes just like he taught me. Miracle of miracles, a few minutes later I reached the other end of the pool!

"You did it man, you did it!" cried out the instructor. All the kids were cheering, and I felt incredible! Maybe I wouldn't win any Olympic medals, but I *could* swim! As I climbed out of the pool, I thanked God for getting me across the pool, and started to wonder about how many other things I really could do, but just didn't know it yet.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did Scott feel in the beginning when he was supposed to swim across the whole pool? A. He was scared because he didn't think he really knew how to swim?
2. How did he feel in the end? A. He felt great because he saw that he really had known how, he just hadn't realized it?

LEADER TIP: Go around and have everyone say something that they're good at. Help each other come up with things and make sure everyone finds something to be proud of.

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

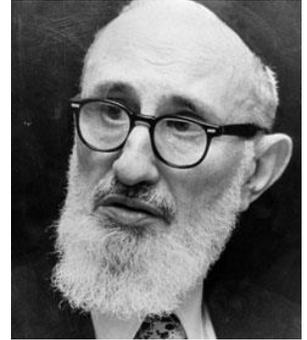
Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik

(February 27, 1903- April 9, 1993)

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik was an Orthodox rabbi, Talmudist and modern Jewish philosopher. Over the course of almost fifty years he ordained close to 2,000 rabbis who became Rabbis in Orthodox shuls across America bringing their respective communities closer to Judaism. Rabbi Soloveitchik was a teacher, guide, mentor, and role model for tens of thousands of Modern Orthodox Jews around the world.

Rabbi Soloveitchik took over after his father as the head of the RIETS rabbinical school at Yeshiva University in 1941. During his time at Yeshiva University, he created the idea of combining the best of religious Torah learning with the best secular learning as well. This has become known as the *Torah U'mada* - "Torah and Science" philosophy unique to Yeshiva University. Through public lectures, writings, and his decisions for the Modern Orthodox world, he strengthened the intellectual and ideological framework of Modern Orthodoxy.

Since he was accepted as the distinguished leader of the Zionist modern Orthodox Judaism world, many leaders and politicians from Israel asked for his advice and blessings in state affairs. Prime Minister Menachem Begin even offered him the position of Chief Rabbi of Israel, but he quietly declined. He was known as the "Rav" and became the greatest leader of Modern Orthodoxy in the twentieth century.



LEADER TIP: Rav Soloveitchik understood that we should respect every Jew no matter how affiliated they were. What is one way we can be more accepting to people who are different than us?

TEFILLAH TREASURES

Shemonah Esrei: Selach Lanu

In this bracha, we ask Hashem to forgive us for all the bad things we've done. Sometimes we do the wrong thing or make bad decisions without thinking about it and sometimes we do the wrong thing or make bad decisions even when we know they're not good. One of the hardest things to do when we do something wrong is to admit that we did something wrong. We don't like to admit that we messed up, even though everyone in the world messes up and no one is perfect. In this bracha, we admit to Hashem that we messed up and we ask Him not to punish us for our mistakes and to give us another chance. If we were to make mistakes or do bad things to our friends every single day and ask them to forgive us every single day, they may get tired of us and not forgive us or give us any more chances. Hashem is not like that though. He knows that we make mistakes every day and that we're human beings who aren't perfect. Hashem gives us another chance every single day no matter how many times we mess up. It's important to always try to be the best people we can be even after we make mistakes. Hashem wants us to get up and try again, so we can't let Him down!

LEADER TIP: Admitting what we've done wrong is very difficult. If it's hard to say it out loud, try sitting with a pen and paper and writing it out and then throwing out the piece of paper.

SHEMOT REVIEW

A new Paroh came about and made all of Bnei Yisrael into slaves forcing them to build cities for him. Paroh gathered all the Hebrew midwives and told them to kill all the Hebrew sons that they delivered. The righteous midwives did not listen to Paroh though. Paroh then commanded the Mitzris to throw all the newborn males into the Nile. Moshe was born. His mother Yocheved, who feared for Moshe's life, put him into a waterproofed basket and sent him afloat down the Nile. Paroh's daughter came to the Nile, and took the child as her own. Moshe's sister Miriam, who watched the entire scene, offered Paroh's daughter to bring a Hebrew nursemaid for the child, and when Paroh's daughter agreed to the suggestion, Miriam got Yocheved. Moshe was raised in Paroh's palace. When he got older, he went out one day and saw a Mitzri hitting a Hebrew. Moshe was so angry that he killed the Mitzri. Paroh heard about what happened and Moshe had to run away. He ran to Midian where he married Tziporah, the daughter of Yitro. They gave birth to a son, Gershom. Meanwhile, Bnei Yisrael's slavery was getting worse and worse back in Mitzrayim. Moses was shepherding Yitro's when he saw "The Burning Bush", where a bush was on fire but not being consumed. When he got closer to the bush Hashem called out to him saying that he should take off his shoes since the place he was standing was holy. Hashem gave Moshe specific instructions to go back to Mitzrayim to rescue Bnei Yisrael and bring them to Israel. Hashem told Moshe that Paroh would not agree to let Bnei Yisrael go but the redemption would come nonetheless, after Hashem strikes the Mitzrim with a strong arm. When Moshe protested that he was not the right person for the job to be Hashem's messenger since he had a lisp, Hashem assigned his brother Aharon to be his spokesperson. Hashem told Moshe to perform three miracles when he goes to Paroh: turn his staff into a snake, his hand would have tzaraat and then be cured, and turn water into blood. Moshe took his wife and two sons and headed for Mitzrayim. Moshe and Aharon went to Paroh and demanded that he let Bnei Yisrael free. Paroh mocked their request and told the Mitzri to increase Bnei Yisrael's workload. In response to this Hashem began to prepare to show us wrath on Paroh and the Mitzrim.

LEADER TIP: It's a new Sefer and a new story! Have half the group leaders come to groups dressed as Mitzrim and half dressed as Jews in Mitzrayim.

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions:

1. What is this week's Parsha?
2. How were the Jewish people treated after the shevatim died?
3. Which shevat did not work?
4. What order did Pharaoh give to the Jewish midwives?
5. Why didn't the midwives obey the order?
6. What decree did Pharaoh issue against the Jewish baby boys?
7. Who were Moshe's parents?
8. When Moshe was born, what did Yocheved place Moshe in? Where did Yocheved place him?
9. Who found Moshe floating in a basket and who took Moshe out of the river?
10. Where did Hashem first speak to Moshe?
11. What mission did Hashem give Moshe?
12. Why didn't Moshe want to be the leader?
13. Who did Hashem say would be the spokesman for Moshe?
14. What did Moshe request from Pharaoh?
15. What was Pharaoh's response?

Answers:

1. Shemot.
2. They were enslaved and forced to work hard.
3. Levi.
4. To kill all Jewish baby boys.
5. They feared Hashem.
6. To drown them.
7. Amram and Yocheved.
8. In a basket in the river.
9. Basya the daughter of Pharaoh.
10. At the Sneh (burning bush).
11. To tell Pharaoh to free the Jewish people.
12. He was humble and a stutterer.
13. His brother Aharon.
14. To free the Jewish people.
15. He refused and he also made the work harder for the Jewish people.

LEADER TIP: Create a fake "Burning Bush" and put it in the room you're in. Make everyone take off their shoes before they come in since the place they are in is holy!

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids about how the Jews felt while they were slaves in Egypt and that when the Jewish people stick together that no one can bring us down.

ACTIVITY:

“Prisoners”

2 teams facing each other, a volunteer goes over to the other team who all have their fists out in front of them. The volunteer taps 3 fists, and the third fist that he taps must chase the volunteer back to his team. If the volunteer gets 'home' first, the chaser becomes his prisoner and must stand behind him until he is 'freed'. If the chaser tags him before they reach the other side the volunteer is the chaser's prisoner. A person is freed, if their captor is chosen to chase and they lose. However, if the captor wins the chase, then the other challenger also becomes their prisoner.

“Sardines”

Sardines is an active game that is played like hide and go seek- only in reverse! One person hides, and everyone else searches for the hidden person. Whenever a person finds the hidden person, they quietly join them in their hiding spot. Soon, the hidden group starts to look like a bunch of sardines! This game should be played in a large area.

Gather everyone together and explain the rules and boundaries of the game. Start off by asking for a volunteer to be the first person to hide. Give them a set amount of time to hide while everyone else closes their eyes. When time is up, everyone splits up and tries to find the hidden person. When someone finds them, the game is not over! They should quietly join them in their hiding spot. The last person to find the hidden person loses that round and becomes the next person to hide. You could also play this game in pairs. This would add a little more teamwork to the game.

DISCUSSION: The Jewish people became slaves to Paroh and the Egyptians for a very long time and were worked extremely hard. Whatever Paroh wanted was what the Jews had to do, no questions asked.

How do you think it feels to be a slave?

What does it mean to be a slave?

Are there good ways to be a slave or just bad?

When we worked in Egypt for Paroh, we couldn't make our own decisions and we had no choice in the matter. We were stuck following a leader who was mean and told us to do things we didn't want to do. We are sometimes even slaves today such as when we get caught up watching TV when we really should be doing homework. We also could be slaves to fitting in with our friends and could sometimes find ourselves doing things we really don't want to do.

When we can surround ourselves by good people and good influences we can overcome anything. When the Jewish people stick together, especially under the influence of good leaders and role models, we can accomplish anything.

In this Parsha, we learn about being slaves and we learn about Moshe being our leader chosen to help Hashem take us out of slavery. But why Moshe? What made him such a great leader?

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A glaring question suggests itself. Moshe went to protect one sheep. In doing so, he obviously neglected the entire flock he left behind and endangered their existence. How can he be praised for abandoning the entire flock to save one individual sheep?

The answer is simple. One sheep all alone out in the wilderness has no protection. The flock, however, were numerous and if they kept together they would be protected by their mere numbers. The obvious moral message is that there is strength in numbers and we Jews can be strong if we stick together. If Jews are united and not bickering about minutiae they can overcome all the obstacles the world throws in their way of survival.

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But on the day of the last lesson, Mr. Walder, our instructor, told us that as a final exam we were all going to swim from one end of the pool to the other. I thought he was joking. But when he lined us all up on one side of the big indoor heated pool, I saw he was serious, and I *knew* only one thing - I was in way over my head. Maybe I knew how to tread water well enough to get by in an emergency, but I couldn't actually swim, and certainly not well enough to get across the whole pool!

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But soon I saw that wasn't going to happen. The line was moving too fast. Somehow the same kids who just a couple of months ago couldn't swim across a bathtub were suddenly gliding across the pool like Olympic stars.

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"Look Scott," he said patiently. "It might seem like it is beyond you, but I've been watching you during all of these lessons, and I'm telling you, you *can* swim."

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"Scott, you have the tools. You know how to do the crawl stroke, move your arms and kick your feet, right?"

"Yeah, but..."

"And you know how to turn your head and breathe between strokes too, don't you?"

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"Okay, but swimming across the whole pool? I mean, it's so far."

"It's just one crawl stroke after another. I'll be right there with you. I know you can do it, and I think by now you know it too. Go ahead, jump in and swim!"

I couldn't even believe I was doing it myself, but I asked God to get me across to the other side in one piece, jumped into the water and started doing the strokes just like he taught me. Miracle of miracles, a few minutes later I reached the other end of the pool!

"You did it man, you did it!" cried out the instructor. All the kids were cheering, and I felt incredible! Maybe I wouldn't win any Olympic medals, but I *could* swim! As I climbed out of the pool, I thanked God for getting me across the pool, and started to wonder about how many other things I really could do, but just didn't know it yet.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think Scott learned from this experience?
 - A. He learned that it's possible to do more than we think we can, and sometimes we have abilities inside of us that we don't even know about.
2. Do you think it was right of the instructor to push Scott to swim across even though he didn't want to go? Why or why not?
 - B. One thing that brings out our hidden abilities is being challenged to go beyond what we feel comfortably able to do. It was the instructor's challenge - based on his expert knowledge of Scott's abilities - that helped him discover he could swim, and discover a new outlook on life.

LEADER TIP: Go around and have everyone say something that they're good at. Help each other come up with things and make sure everyone finds something to be proud of.

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik

(February 27, 1903- April 9, 1993)

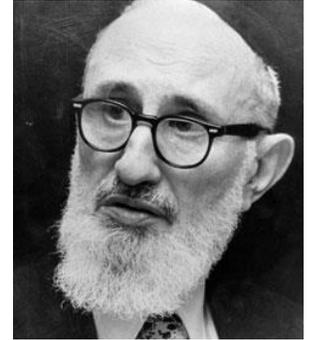
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Rabbi Soloveitchik took over after his father as the head of the RIETS rabbinical school at Yeshiva University in 1941. During his time at Yeshiva University, he created the idea of combining the best of religious Torah learning with the best secular learning as well. This has become known as the Torah U'mada - "Torah and Science" philosophy unique to Yeshiva University. Through public lectures, writings, and his decisions for the Modern Orthodox world, he strengthened the intellectual and ideological framework of Modern Orthodoxy.

When Rabbi Soloveitchik became more and more involved in the Modern Orthodox world, he joined the Mizrahi Religious Zionists of America (RZA) and the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), where many of his students were involved in leadership positions. Even though he was connected intellectually and through family connections to the more Charedi movement, his world-view was in the middle of Modern Orthodox Judaism, stressing the importance of secular studies, making a living, and active Zionism.

There were many major Charedi rabbinical leaders who signed and issued a proclamation forbidding any rabbinical alumni of their Yeshivot from joining with Reform and/or Conservative Judaism rabbis in professional organizations. Rabbi Soloveitchik refused to sign it affirming that there are areas, particularly relating to problems that threaten all of Judaism that we should address and work on together regardless of affiliation.

Since he was accepted as the distinguished leader of the Zionist modern Orthodox Judaism world, many leaders and politicians from Israel asked for his advice and blessings in state affairs. Prime Minister Menachem Begin even offered him the position of Chief Rabbi of Israel, but he quietly declined. He was known as the "Rav" and became the greatest leader of Modern Orthodoxy in the twentieth century.



LEADER TIP: Rav Soloveitchik understood that we should respect every Jew no matter how affiliated they were. What is one way we can be more accepting to people who are different than us?

TEFILLAH TREASURES

Shemonah Esrei: Selach Lanu

In the previous bracha, we asked Hashem to help us do teshuvah, turning away from our bad habits and fixing our bad ways. As a consequence of that, we ask Him in this bracha to forgive us for the things we've done wrong and the bad decisions we made. This bracha contains an element of vidui (confession) where we acknowledge before Hashem that we have sinned. We actually ask for two types of forgiveness for two types of sins. First, we request selicha for our chata'im, meaning that we ask Hashem to overlook sins that we did without thinking. We were careless, we made mistakes and we'll try to do better but no harm was intended. Next, we ask Hashem for mechilah for our p'sha'im. This type of sin is intentional. Willfully disobeying Hashem is a form of rebelling against Him. While we are deserving of punishment, we ask that He forgives us. The bracha ends that Hashem is "Chanun, haMarbeh lisloach," the Gracious One with an abundant ability to forgive. Forgiveness is not something one automatically receives. What one objectively deserves is to be punished. The fact that Hashem forgives us is a result of His grace alone and not a sign of any inherent merits on our part.

LEADER TIP: Admitting what we've done wrong is very difficult. If it's hard to say it out loud, try sitting with a pen and paper and writing it out and then throwing out the piece of paper.

SHEMOT REVIEW

A new Paroh came about and made all of Bnei Yisrael into slaves forcing them to build cities for him. Paroh gathered all the Hebrew midwives and told them to kill all the Hebrew sons that they delivered. The righteous midwives did not listen to Paroh though. Paroh then commanded the Mitzriyim to throw all the newborn males into the Nile. Moshe was born. His mother Yocheved, who feared for Moshe's life, put him into a waterproofed basket and sent him afloat down the Nile. Paroh's daughter came to the Nile, and took the child as her own. Moshe's sister Miriam, who watched the entire scene, offered Paroh's daughter to bring a Hebrew nursemaid for the child, and when Paroh's daughter agreed to the suggestion, Miriam got Yocheved. Moshe was raised in Paroh's palace. When he got older, he went out one day and saw a Mitzri hitting a Hebrew. Moshe was so angry that he killed the Mitzri. Paroh heard about what happened and Moshe had to run away. He ran to Midian where he married Tziporah, the daughter of Yitro. They gave birth to a son, Gershom. Meanwhile, Bnei Yisrael's slavery was getting worse and worse back in Mitzrayim. Moses was shepherding Yitro's when he saw "The Burning Bush", where a bush was on fire but not being consumed. When he got closer to the bush Hashem called out to him saying that he should take off his shoes since the place he was standing was holy. Hashem gave Moshe specific instructions to go back to Mitzrayim to rescue Bnei Yisrael and bring them to Israel. Hashem told Moshe that Paroh would not agree to let Bnei Yisrael go but the redemption would come nonetheless, after Hashem strikes the Mitzrim with a strong arm. When Moshe protested that he was not the right person for the job to be Hashem's messenger since he had a lisp, Hashem assigned his brother Aharon to be his spokesperson. Hashem told Moshe to perform three miracles when he goes to Paroh: turn his staff into a snake, his hand would have tzaraat and then be cured, and turn water into blood. Moshe took his wife and two sons and headed for Mitzrayim. Moshe and Aharon went to Paroh and demanded that he let Bnei Yisrael free. Paroh mocked their request and told the Mitzri to increase Bnei Yisrael's workload. In response to this Hashem began to prepare to show us wrath on Paroh and the Mitzrim.

LEADER TIP: It's a new Sefer and a new story! Have half the group leaders come to groups dressed as Mitzrim and half dressed as Jews in Mitzrayim.

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions:

1. What is this week's Parsha?
2. How were the Jewish people treated after the shevatim died?
3. Which shevat did not work?
4. What order did Pharaoh give to the Jewish midwives?
5. Why didn't the midwives obey the order?
6. What decree did Pharaoh issue against the Jewish baby boys?
7. Why did Pharaoh want to kill the Jewish male babies?
8. Who were Moshe's parents?
9. Name Amram's and Yocheved's three children.
10. When Moshe was born, what did Yocheved place Moshe in? Where did Yocheved place him?
11. Who found Moshe floating in a basket and who took Moshe out of the river?
12. What did Moshe do when he saw an Egyptian beating a Jew?
13. Where did Moshe run to after killing the Egyptian?
14. Who did Moshe marry?
15. Where did Hashem first speak to Moshe?
16. What mission did Hashem give Moshe?
17. Why didn't Moshe want to be the leader?
18. Who did Hashem say would be the spokesman for Moshe?
19. What did Moshe request from Pharaoh?
20. What was Pharaoh's response?

Answers:

1. Shemot.
2. They were enslaved and forced to work hard.
3. Levi.
4. To kill all Jewish baby boys.
5. They feared Hashem.
6. To drown them.
7. Because he knew that the savior's downfall would be through water.
8. Amram and Yocheved.
9. Miriam, Aharon, and Moshe.
10. In a basket in the river.
11. Basya the daughter of Pharaoh.
12. He killed the Egyptian.
13. Midian.
14. Tziporah.
15. At the Sneh (burning bush).
16. To tell Pharaoh to free the Jewish people.
17. He was humble and a stutterer.
18. His brother Aharon. 11
19. To free the Jewish people.
20. He refused and he also made the work harder for the Jewish people.

LEADER TIP: Create a fake "Burning Bush" and put it in the room you're in. Make everyone take off their shoes before they come in since the place they are in is holy!

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids about how the Jews felt while they were slaves in Egypt and that when the Jewish people stick together that no one can bring us down.

ACTIVITY:

“Sardines”

Sardines is an active game that is played like hide and go seek- only in reverse! One person hides, and everyone else searches for the hidden person. Whenever a person finds the hidden person, they quietly join them in their hiding spot. Soon, the hidden group starts to look like a bunch of sardines! This game should be played in a large area.

Gather everyone together and explain the rules and boundaries of the game. Start off by asking for a volunteer to be the first person to hide. Give them a set amount of time to hide while everyone else closes their eyes. When time is up, everyone splits up and tries to find the hidden person. When someone finds them, the game is not over! They should quietly join them in their hiding spot. The last person to find the hidden person loses that round and becomes the next person to hide. You could also play this game in pairs. This would add a little more teamwork to the game.

“Screaming Viking”

This is an extremely interactive and silly game that requires players to correctly act out crazy commands. Have everyone sit in a large circle with a facilitator standing in the middle. The basic idea of the game is that the person in the middle should try to get someone in the circle to make a mistake. If a person makes a mistake, he or she becomes the new person in the middle. To get someone “out”, the person in the middle points to one person who is sitting in the circle and commands the action. Sometimes only the person pointed to does the action and sometimes the person to their left and right joins them in the action. They must do the action immediately otherwise they are out. There are many actions that can be done and you’re encouraged to come up with your own actions as well. The “Screaming Viking” requires the person pointed to form two horns with their fingers on their forehead and scream as loud as they can. The person to their left and right must make rowing motions with their arms. “Batman” requires the person to pretend to hop into their Batmobile and sing the Batman theme song. “Karate Chop” requires the person in the middle to use his hand and do a karate chop while the people next to them put their hands together and bow to them. “Jello” requires the person in the middle to wobble like jello while the other two people put their hand to their ears like a phone and say “Jello?” like their answering a phone. If a mistake is made by any of the three people then that person must go into the middle of the circle. Have fun! Be creative! Make it your own!

DISCUSSION: The Jewish people became slaves to Paroh and the Egyptians for a very long time and were worked extremely hard. Whatever Paroh wanted was what the Jews had to do, no questions asked. How do you think it feels to be a slave? What does it mean to be a slave? Are there good ways to be a slave or just bad? When we worked in Egypt for Paroh, we couldn’t make our own decisions and we had no choice in the matter. We were stuck following a leader who was mean and told us to do things we didn’t want to do. We are sometimes even slaves today such as when we get caught up watching TV when we really should be doing homework. We also could be slaves to fitting in with our friends and could sometimes find ourselves doing things we really don’t want to do. When we can surround ourselves by good people and good influences we can overcome anything. When the Jewish people stick together, especially under the influence of good leaders and role models, we can accomplish anything. In this Parsha, we learn about being slaves and we learn about Moshe being our leader chosen to help Hashem take us out of slavery. But why Moshe? What made him such a great leader? The Midrash explains why Moshe Rabbeinu was chosen for this task. It tells us that when Moshe, who was the shepherd for Yitro, was out in the wilderness with the flock one little sheep went astray and Moshe went after it to protect it. The sheep had sought water to drink. When Moshe saw this he picked it up and carried it back on his shoulders. Hashem said that if a person can do this for the flock of a man he will certainly do so for the flock of Hashem, the

Jewish people. (Shemot Rabbah, 2-2) A glaring question suggests itself. Moshe went to protect one sheep. In doing so, he obviously neglected the entire flock he left behind and endangered their existence. How can he be praised for abandoning the entire flock to save one individual sheep? The answer is simple. One sheep all alone out in the wilderness has no protection. The flock, however, were numerous and if they kept together they would be protected by their mere numbers. The obvious moral message is that there is strength in numbers and we Jews can be strong if we stick together. If Jews are united and not bickering about minutiae they can overcome all the obstacles the world throws in their way of survival.

LEADER TIP: Ask the kids if they ever feel like they're being forced by their friends to do things they don't want to do. Have a discussion about peer pressure and how to beat it.

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: Each of us has inside ourselves the ability to accomplish much more than we realize. Yet sometimes we let our fears and feelings of not being good enough stand in the way. In this week's Parsha, we learn about how Moshe had within him the ability to stand up against the cruel and powerful Paroh, and be the one to lead the entire Jewish people out from miserable slavery to freedom. At first even Moshe didn't realize he could do it. But Hashem encouraged him, and helped him to see his true abilities. Moshe discovered his hidden potential and changed the course of human history. We, too, can learn how to see our true abilities, overcome the feelings that hold us back, and accomplish what we never thought we could.

"OFF THE DEEP END"

It may have only been a 20 meter pool, but to me it looked like the Atlantic Ocean. As I stood there in line watching one kid after another jump in and swim to the other side, I knew only one thing: *I* could never do it. I had been taking after-school swimming lessons. Everything went along fine at first. I learned to tread water, paddle like a dog, and even to do 'the crawl' stroke. Maybe I couldn't actually *swim*, but now, at least, I could flop around in the water long enough for a lifeboat to arrive. Let the typhoon come; I was ready.

But on the day of the last lesson, Mr. Walder, our instructor, told us that as a final exam we were all going to swim from one end of the pool to the other. I thought he was joking. But when he lined us all up on one side of the big indoor heated pool, I saw he was serious, and I *knew* only one thing - I was in way over my head. Maybe I knew how to tread water well enough to get by in an emergency, but I couldn't actually swim, and certainly not well enough to get across the whole pool!

As we got in line, I was careful to strategically position myself at the end of the line. I figured the hour-long lesson would probably finish well before they reached my turn, and I would be able to quietly return home to life on dry land.

But soon I saw that wasn't going to happen. The line was moving too fast. Somehow the same kids who just a couple of months ago couldn't swim across a bathtub were suddenly gliding across the pool like Olympic stars. Now there were only two guys ahead of me and I began to panic. Maybe I could pretend I had a cramp, or explain to Mr. Walder how I had to get home early that day to baby-sit for my pet cat. One way or the other I would have to get out of it. After all, there was no way to do the impossible.

Mark, the guy in front of me, jumped in and now it was just the two of us - me and the instructor on one side of the pool, and everyone else on the other. "Okay, Scott, last but not least. Your turn!" called out the man with a smile, his shining whistle dangling on the chain around his neck.

I didn't move. It was embarrassing for sure to just stand there like a zombie, but it sure beat drowning! Mr. Walder came closer and asked, "What's going on, Scotty?"

"I can't do it, Mr. Walder," I answered between clenched teeth. "It's impossible. I can't swim across the pool."

I was afraid he was going to laugh, or start yelling at me. He looked at me, then at the water, shook his head and said, "I know just how you feel."

He did?

"It looks like an awfully long way from this side of the pool. But you know what? You can do it."

I was glad *he* felt that way, but that didn't change the impossible reality. I shook my head tensely. "No, you don't understand. I can't swim. I just can't do it."

"Look Scott," he said patiently. "It might seem like it is beyond you, but I've been watching you during all of these lessons, and I'm telling you, you *can* swim."

I shook my head.

"Scott, you have the tools. You know how to do the crawl stroke, move your arms and kick your feet, right?"

"Yeah, but..."

"And you know how to turn your head and breathe between strokes too, don't you?"

I nodded. It was true, but still...

"Scotty, guess what? That means you *know how to swim!*"

I was about to argue, then I gave his words a second thought. It was true, I could do all the things he mentioned. Did that mean I really could swim after all?

"So what do you say, Scotty?"

"Okay, but swimming across the whole pool? I mean, it's so far."

"It's just one crawl stroke after another. I'll be right there with you. I know you can do it, and I think by now you know it too. Go ahead, jump in and swim!"

I couldn't even believe I was doing it myself, but I asked God to get me across to the other side in one piece, jumped into the water and started doing the strokes just like he taught me. Miracle of miracles, a few minutes later I reached the other end of the pool!

"You did it man, you did it!" cried out the instructor. All the kids were cheering, and I felt incredible! Maybe I wouldn't win any Olympic medals, but *I could* swim! As I climbed out of the pool, I thanked God for getting me across the pool, and started to wonder about how many other things I really could do, but just didn't know it yet.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is there any limit to what we are able to accomplish?
 - A. The vast majority of us are only tapping into a tiny fraction of our true mental and physical and spiritual capacities. God created each of us with vast and powerful abilities, but He leaves it up to us whether we will choose to develop and use them. While limits may exist, if we really push ourselves we will discover that there are incredible and unimaginable accomplishments we can reach before even getting near those limits.
2. Why do you think people so often fail to access their true abilities?
 - A. It is in many ways easier and more comfortable to live a life full of self-imposed limitations than to really challenge ourselves to constantly grow and bring more and more of our potential into actuality. We may be afraid of failing, and of the effort that growth requires. Yet there is nothing more rewarding and no greater "high" than really becoming all we are able. God wants us to become all that we can be and it is one of our main spiritual tasks in life.

LEADER TIP: Go around and have everyone say something that they're good at. Help each other come up with things and make sure everyone finds something to be proud of.

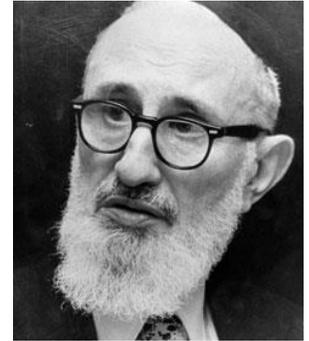
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(February 27, 1903- April 9, 1993)

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After he got married, Rabbi Soloveitchik moved to Berlin in Germany where he got a Ph.D in philosophy at the University of Berlin while still keeping a busy schedule of intense Torah learning. While he was studying in Berlin, he built relationships with two other young scholars pursuing similar paths to his own. One was Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who would become the leader of the Chabad Lubavitch movement based in Brooklyn, NY, and the other was Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner who would become the Dean of the Yeshiva



Rabbi Chaim Berlin in Brooklyn, New York. They each created a way of thought that connected the Eastern European way of traditional Torah learning with the new powers of modernity in the Western World.

Rabbi Soloveitchik took over after his father as the head of the RIETS rabbinical school at Yeshiva University in 1941. During his time at Yeshiva University, he created the idea of combining the best of religious Torah learning with the best secular learning as well. This has become known as the *Torah U'mada* - "Torah and Science" philosophy unique to Yeshiva University. Through public lectures, writings, and his decisions for the Modern Orthodox world, he strengthened the intellectual and ideological framework of Modern Orthodoxy.

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LEADER TIP: Rav Soloveitchik understood that we should respect every Jew no matter how affiliated they were. What is one way we can be more accepting to people who are different than us?

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Shemonah Esrei: Selach Lanu

In the previous bracha, we asked Hashem to help us do teshuvah, turning away from our bad habits and fixing our bad ways. As a consequence of that, we ask Him in this bracha to forgive us for the things we've done wrong and the bad decisions we made. This bracha contains an element of vidui (confession) where we acknowledge before Hashem that we have sinned. We actually ask for two types of forgiveness for two types of sins. First, we request selicha for our chata'im, meaning that we ask Hashem to overlook sins that we did without thinking. We were careless, we made mistakes and we'll try to do better but no harm was intended. Next, we ask Hashem for mechilah for our p'sha'im. This type of sin is intentional. Willfully disobeying Hashem is a form of rebelling against Him. While we are deserving of punishment, we ask that He forgives us. At the start of the bracha, we ask Hashem for selicha and then mechilah. In the next part, we flip it around and say that Hashem is mocheil v'solei'ach, that He forgives and overlooks. There are several explanations for this. One of them is that forgiveness happens in steps. When Hashem forgives our p'sha'im, the intentional transgressions, they are reduced in size to chata'im, the careless sins. When He wipes away our chata'im, the former p'sha'im are then included. The bracha ends that Hashem is "Chanun, haMarbeh lisloach," the Gracious One with an abundant ability to forgive. Forgiveness is not something one automatically receives. What one objectively deserves is to be punished. The fact that Hashem forgives us is a result of His grace alone and not a sign of any inherent merits on our part.

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WORD FIND

- SHIFRAH
- PUAH
- YOCHEVED
- AMRAM
- MOSHE
- AHARON
- MIRIAM
- TZIPPORAH

D T Z I P P O R A H
E A N V S H R V A T
V H Z E H S O M M T
E S H I F R A H R R
H P X F L H A Q A E
C Z M E D A H R M Y
O P F F Y U A C M N
Y D L J H P R H W J
M I R I A M O T F D
I D F P O I N S M S

Stat Line of the Week - Shemot

1. 13 out of 54 sedras; 1st of 11 in Shemot
2. Written on 215.2 lines in a Torah; rank: 18th
3. 7 parshiot; 6 open, 1 closed
4. 124 pesukim – 15th (2nd in Shemot)
5. 1763 words – 14th (2nd in Shemot)
6. 6762 letters – 16th (2nd in Shemot)
7. Its pesukim are above average in length (number of words and letters)

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are in Shemot

THIS JUST IN!

- In Kentucky, it is illegal to carry ice-cream in your back pocket.
- A cat uses its whiskers to determine if a space is too small to squeeze through.
- A cesium atom in an atomic clock beats 9,192,631,770 times a second.
- A group of crows is called a murder.

This Week in Jewish History

January 9, 1935

Establishment of HaKibbutz HaDati Movement

The Religious Kibbutz Movement (Hebrew: *HaKibbutz HaDati*) is an organizational framework for Orthodox kibbutzim in Israel. Its membership includes 19 communities, 16 of them traditional kibbutzim, and three others in the category of *moshav shitufi* (communal settlements), meaning that they have no communal dining hall or children's house but maintain a shared economy. The Religious Kibbutz Movement has about 10,000 members.

The Religious Kibbutz Movement was founded in 1935 by groups of Jewish pioneers who immigrated to Palestine from Europe. It was the fourth kibbutz movement established in Palestine, after Hever Hakvutzot, HaKibbutz HaMeuhad and Hashomer Hatzair.

From the outset, the policy of this movement was settlement in clusters, due to the need for religious schooling. Another consideration was the desire to counteract the influences of a secular environment: A single religious kibbutz in a non-religious environment would find it difficult to defend its religious and social principles. Alliance settlement also created the possibility for mutual assistance, with veteran settlements sharing their experience with those that came later.

In 1937-1948, the Religious Kibbutz Movement established three settlement alliances of three kibbutzim each. The first was in the Beit Shean Valley, the second was in the Chevron mountains south of Beitlechem (known as Gush Etzion), and the third was in the western Negev. Another kibbutz, Yavneh, was founded in the center of the country as the core of a fourth alliance which only came into being after the establishment of the state.

Many kibbutzim of the Religious Kibbutz Movement are in the midst of transfer, similar to the trend in non-religious kibbutzim. The movement operates a number of educational institutions, including Yeshivat Ein Tzurim, Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa, Ein HaNatziv Women's Seminary, the Yaacov Herzog Institute for Jewish Studies, a school for post-military Jewish studies for women on Massuot Yitzhak, and a Field School at Kfar Etzion. Three kibbutzim, Beerot Yitzhak, Sde Eliyahu and Yavneh, also offer 5-month ulpan (Hebrew language study) programs for participants from abroad.



Parsha Points to Ponder...

In this week's Parsha, Moshe is selected to lead the Jewish people out of Egyptian bondage and take them through the Wilderness to the Promised Land. The Midrash explains why Moshe Rabbeinu was chosen for this task. It tells us that when Moshe, who was the shepherd for Yitro, was out in the wilderness with the flock one little sheep went astray and Moshe went after it to protect it. The sheep had sought water to drink. When Moshe saw this he picked it up and carried it back on his shoulders. Hashem said that if a person can do this for the flock of a man he will certainly do so for the flock of Hashem, the Jewish people. (Shemot Rabbah, 2-2)

A glaring question suggests itself. Moshe went to protect one sheep. In doing so, he obviously neglected the entire flock he left behind and endangered their existence. How can he be praised for abandoning the entire flock to save one individual sheep?

The answer is simple. One sheep all alone out in the wilderness has no protection. The flock, however, were numerous and if they kept together they would be protected by their mere numbers. The obvious moral message is that there is strength in numbers and we Jews can be strong if we stick together. If Jews are united and not bickering about minutiae they can overcome all the obstacles the world throws in their way of survival.



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