Jewish Tribune – Vaeira

**The Making of Moshe Rabbeinu**

We continue the familiar story of Klal Yisroel in Mitzrayim in this week’s parsha with seven of the ten makkos. Picture the scene of Moshe Rabbeinu entering Pharaoh’s palace, remonstrating and warning Pharaoh. Imagine an arrogant Egyptian King on a gold throne surrounded by soldiers in loyal duty, looking down disdainfully.

Now put yourselves in Moshe Rabbeinu’s shoes. Are you nervous? How do you feel when you enter the palace? Like a gladiator entering the arena, fearlessly going into the lion’s den?

Where did Moshe Rabbeinu get this courage from? Certainly, it was an inordinate amount of yiras shomayim. But there was something else too.

Have you wondered about Moshe Rabbeinu’s background? Why did HKBH orchestrate things that Moshe grows up in the palace of Pharaoh? Why the need for him to experience life as an Egyptian prince?

The Ibn Ezra in last week’s parsha (Shemos 2;3) gives a fascinating answer.

Perhaps, says the Ibn Ezra, HKBH orchestrated the regal upbringing of Moshe Rabbeinu in the palace of a king, to instil in him the nobility and confidence needed to carry out his mission in life.

Had Moshe lived among Klal Yisroel, he would have lived the life of a slave and that experience would be damaging. It is hard to overcome those feelings of lowliness and of being downtrodden to confidently come to the palace of the world leader and make demands.

Rav Yisroel Belsky ztl was the legendary Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas and passed away in 2016. Those who read his fascinating biography will know what a towering intellect and talented and charismatic leader he was. He had a remarkable breadth and confidence.

Rav Belsky once reminisced about his early childhood. I found one particular vignette fascinating. Every night, Rav Belsky’s mother would put her young son to bed. After she said “Shema” with him, she then sang a song. What song do you think it was? What would you sing?

The song Rebbetzen Chana Tzirel Belsky, daughter of Rav Binyomin Wilhelm, founder of Yeshivas Toras Vodaas, sang was none other than “You are my sunshine”.

Not a Jewish song, but a song that showed her young son that he was loved and was the sunshine of his mother’s life. That feeling of warmth and of being loved instils a confidence that lasts a lifetime and helps a person fulfil his or her mission in life.

At a public address in 2013, former senator Joseph Lieberman, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee in 2000, and a frum Jew, reported that during the 2000 presidential campaign, the Secret Service enforced a policy of high-level security and kept the identity of the hotels at which he was staying strictly secret.

The policy, Lieberman noted, seemed to work quite effectively and people really didn’t know at which hotel he was. Yet, to Lieberman’s astonishment, in virtually every city to which he travelled, when he arrived at the hotel, there was a kosher meal waiting for him from the local Chabad shliach.

I saw this remarkable anecdote in a highly acclaimed book by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin entitled “Rebbe”. How did so many Chabad shluchim find this secret out? Elsewhere in this book, the author notes that if you are trained day after day, to stop total strangers and ask them if they are Jewish and if they would like to put on tefillin, this creates a thick skin, and a boldness and confidence.

Either way, says the Ibn Ezra, this is why HKBH designed the seemingly unusual background to Moshe Rabbeinu’s life and enabled him to carry out his mission in life with a confidence and strong sense of purpose.

Sometimes we wonder about the circumstances and happenings of our lives. We may set off in one direction, and end up somewhere else or experience events not of our making or asking. Perhaps HKBH is creating the circumstances needed for us to fulfil our mission in life and create the masterpiece that only each of us can make.

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