

Parshas Shemos – Warren Greenwood

י"ט טבת תשע"ה – 9 January 2015 – שבת פ' שמות

וואלה שמות בני ישראל.....

And these are the names of the children of Israel. (1.1)

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 285), rules that every individual is required to read the weekly parasha twice (shnayim Mikra), and its' Aramaic translation once (v'echad Targum).

This requirement is alluded to in the acronym of the word '*shemos*', which is formed by the letters **shin**, **mem** **vav**, **tes....shnayim** **Mikra** **v'echad** **targum**.

Secondly, Chazal note that the word "shemos" alludes to three mitzvos:

Shabbos, **mila**, **v'tefillin**, ("Shabbos, circumcision and tefillin"). These are the 3 mitzvos that the Torah refers to as "a sign". That is, these mitzvos signify the unbreakable bond between Hashem and the Jewish people.

In regard to the *mitzvah* of Shabbos the Torah states "For it is a *sign* between Me and you for your generations" (31:13).

In connection with the *mitzvah* of *Bris Mila*, the Torah tells us, "and that shall be *the sign* of the covenant between Me and you" (Bereishis 17:11).

When describing the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*, the Torah says, "and it shall be for you a *sign on your arm*" (13:9).

Accordingly, by stating "And these are the shemos of the Children of Israel who were coming to Egypt," the Torah is hinting to the idea that when the Jews enter a foreign land, these are the three *mitzvos* that protect them from assimilating with the nations.

ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה (ב:כג)

"A long time passed and the king of Egypt died. The Bnei Yisroel moaned because of their enslavement, and they cried".

Rashi explains that he didn't actually die. He was stricken with leprosy, and he used to kill Jewish children and bathe in their blood. According to this interpretation the Torah's reason for stating that he died, was because a leper is considered as good as dead.

The question arises: How did the Sages know that this was the intent of the Torah? Perhaps he did actually die as the simple meaning would suggest.

The Vilna Gaon discovers the solution in the language of the verse itself. Whenever the Torah tells us of the death, or impending death of a king, he is mentioned by name alone, without any royal title. For example (I Kings 2:1) "And the days of David's death drew near." David; not **King** David. So too with Solomon, Rehoboam, Abiah, all of whose names are listed without title when their times came. As King Solomon writes, (Ecclesiastes 8:8), "There is no authority on the day of death." Therefore, the royal title is not mentioned in connection with death.

Here, however, the Torah tells us that "the king of Egypt died." Since his royal title is used, it indicates that he did not actually die.

Similarly, we find in (Isiah 6:1), "In the year of the death of King Uziah." Rashi explains that he did not actually die, he only contracted leprosy. Once again it is mention of the royal title which clearly indicates that the Torah is not referring to actual death.