

Parshas Shemos – Growing Up – Richard Goldstein

כ"א טבת תש"פ – 18th January 2020 – שבת פ' שמות

Extracts from verses 10 and 11 of chapter 2 of Parshas Shemos translate as follows:

"The boy grew up and she brought him to the daughter of Pharaoh and he was a son to her... It happened in those days that Moshe grew up and he went out to see his Brethren and observe their burdens..."

Rashi's question on this passuk is why do we need to be told that Moshe grew up in verse 11, when this is already mentioned in verse 10? We know he had grown up. He answers (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Illa'i) that the reference to growing up in verse 10 refers to Moshe's physical development, whereas growing up in verse 11 means he was appointed as head of the household. In this regard, the Tur HaAroch notes that verse 10 speaks about a "child" growing up, but by contrast verse 11 omits a reference to Moshe being a child. In short, he had become an adult. (According to the Shemos Rabbah, Moshe had attained 20 years or, according to others, 40 years at this time.)

Moshe rose to prominence in Pharaoh's palace. The Ramban explains that the repetition of growing up shows that he had grown in stature such that he could stand before Pharaoh the king. This would enable Moshe to later stand before, Hashem, the king of kings.

The Shemos Rabbah develops this further. Moshe grew up not in the manner of the rest of the world, but rather because he went out to his brothers. He left the luxury and comfort of Pharaoh's palace to look upon the burdens and suffering of his brothers in slavery. He would try to carry their burdens on his shoulders and organise work in the best way possible.

The Shemos Rabbah explains that Hashem said to Moshe because you set aside your business and went to see the sorrow of Israel and acted towards them as brothers, I will ignore the distinction between Heaven and Earth and talk to you. Further, later when it is written, "*And when Hashem saw that [Moses] turned aside to see*"; this means Hashem saw Moshe had left aside his business to see their burdens. Therefore, "*Hashem called unto him [Moshe] out of the midst of the [burning] bush*".

What a beautiful idea. A person truly grows up when he recognises the plight of others. Rabbi Frand writes on this that perhaps this is why at a Bris we say "*ze hakatan*" - may this child (who thinks only of himself) - "*gadol yihiyeh*" - become an adult (looking past his own self-interest). An adult shows his greatness by thinking of others, and taking on the responsibility and burdens of others. And by so doing, he causes Hashem to leave his palace in Heaven and come and speak with us on Earth.

Written on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah of Joshua Samuel (Yehoshua Shmuel ben Yona) on 18 January 2020 (21st Teves 5780).