

Such was the magnitude of R' Laizer's personality and leadership capabilities. He quickly vouched for R' Silver's mission and credentials. “Get rid of him,” Senator Taft added, laughing, “as soon as possible - before he takes over!” TORAH GEMS ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו וירבו ויעצמו במאד מאד ותמלא הארץ אותם וגו' (א-ז) When Yosef, his brother, and his entire generation died, the children of Israel <i>"were fertile and abundant, and their population increased ... the land was filled with them."</i> The entire Land of Egypt was filled with them. They mingled with the Egyptians, adopting the Egyptian way of life. The <i>Medrash</i> points out the dire results, stating: <i>"When Yosef died, Jews stopped performing bris milah, saying, 'We want to be like the Egyptians!' Because of what they did, Hashem turned the Egyptian's affection for them into hatred."</i> In other words, Yosef's death prompted the <i>Bnei Yisroel</i> to stop doing <i>Bris Milah</i>! Amazing! How can it be that during the lifetime of <i>Yosef Hatzaddik</i>, they observed <i>milah</i>, and as soon as he died, they turned their back on this <i>mitzvah</i>, even though Yosef's brothers were still alive? The Netziv, R' Naftoli Tzvi Yehudah Berlin ZT"L gives the following answer: As long as Yosef lived, he did not permit the children of Yaakov to live outside Goshen. Being segregated from the Egyptians, the idea of assimilation did not enter their minds. After Yosef's death, the segregation law was no longer enforced. Now they could settle wherever they wished, and they dispersed all over Egypt. Forgotten was <i>Hashem's</i> message to Avrohom, <i>"Your descendants shall be foreigners."</i> Living among the Egyptians, they integrated with them, and took on their lifestyle and culture to the point that they rebelled against <i>Hashem's</i> word, casting off the <i>mitzvah</i> of <i>milah</i>. Immediately, G-d turned the Egyptians against them, filling their hearts with hatred and disgust. ותיראן המילדת את האלקים ולא עשו כאשר דבר אליהן מלך מצרים ותחיין את הילדים וגו' (א-ז) Rashi details just exactly who these Jewish midwives were: Shifrah and Puah were Yocheved, the mother of <i>Moshe Rabbeinu</i>, and Miriam, his sister. They were called by these unusual names to indicate how they helped the newborn babies: <i>Shifrah</i> refers to beautifying the child, and <i>Puah</i> means cooing to soothe the baby, related to a word meaning <i>to</i> shout. Now, we know that Yocheved and Miriam were prophetesses, exceptional people of exceptional character; is this the greatest praise that the <i>Torah</i> could possibly describe them with? That they were women who knew how to beautify and soothe newborn babies? Many, if not most, mothers would consider themselves capable of handling their babies this way! R' Tzvi Hirsch of Liska ZT"L, author of Ach Pri Tevuah gives a wonderful explanation of this <i>posuk</i>. Homiletically, the word מילדות - <i>midwives</i>, can also refer to the leaders and educators of the Jewish nation, those who give life to the people in a spiritual sense. The methods of the two midwives refer to the two distinct methods by which the Jewish leaders tend to administer to their flock. One uses the way of <i>"Shifrah,"</i> to inspire people and help them improve by showing them how beautiful and good they are. Others follow the way of <i>"Puah,"</i> to shout and admonish until they repent. Now, in speaking of these midwives' efforts in Egypt, the Torah continues <i>"ותחיין את הילדים"</i> - <i>"And they kept the boys alive."</i> The common denominator is that both forms of leadership stem from love of one's fellow Jew and both give life to the Jewish nation. <tr><td colspan="2"></td><td> שליט"א, באופן הבא: הנה בתפילת יום הכיפורים, בשעת העבודה, אנו מתפללים ואומרים "והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה כשהיו שומעים את השם מפורש יוצא מפי כהן גדול" (יומא סו.). ומסבירים בספרים הקדושים ששם ה' שהיה יוצא מפיו של הכהן גדול, היה יוצא מעצמו. כלומר, שלאור גדולתו ורוממותו, וע"י מעשיו הקדושים של הכהן גדול, מחמת זה היה יוצא השם המפורש מאליו, ובלי שהכהן גדול היה צריך להוציא את השם מפיו ממש. עפ"י זה יש להבין מה שהקשה משה רבינו "ואמרו לי מה שמו מה אמר להם". דכיון שלאור מעשיו הגדולים וגדולתו הנוראית וקדושתו של משה רבינו, אי"כ כשהרג את המצרי ע"י השם המפורש, לא היה הוציא ממש מפיו, אלא השם היה יוצא מאליו. ממילא, עתה כשרוצה משה ללכת אל העם, עדיין לא ידע את השם של הקב"ה, ומשי"ה ביקש לדעת "מה שמו". מעשה אבות....סימן לבנים ויהי בימים ההם ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם וכו' (ב-יא) Every generation is granted leaders to fill the necessary responsibilities and requirements of that specific generation. Just as <i>Moshe Rabbeinu</i> was chosen by <i>Hashem</i> to be the savior of the Jewish people, who would lead them out of the misery and exile of Egypt, so too, <i>Rabbonim</i> and <i>Gedolei Hador</i> are specifically tailored to meet the ever-present needs of their people. While feeding thousands of Holocaust survivors in concentration and DP camps, the <i>Vaad Hatzalah</i> organization did not forget their original mission: to bring <i>Roshei Yeshiva</i> and their <i>talmidirn</i> to freedom. The Vaad labored to secure entry visas to the United States or Palestine for hundreds of surviving scholars who made their way into Poland and Western Europe. In July, 1946, a pogrom in Kielce, Poland, took the lives of forty-two Jews and wounded hundreds more. The Vaad responded with herculean - and often improvised - relief efforts to evacuate the scholars as quickly as possible. R' Eliezer Silver ZT"L, acting as a Vaad representative and president of the <i>Agudas Harabonim</i>, was asked to travel to Europe to assess the rescue effort there. He spent three months visiting Holland, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Poland. Wearing a surplus American Army uniform purchased for this mission, he moved about freely, distributing funds to build <i>mikvaos</i>, <i>yeshivos</i> and kosher kitchens. He also located children who had been in hiding throughout the war. This bearded rabbi in uniform did experience some awkward moments. When an allied soldier saluted him, R' Silver did not respond in kind, causing the soldier to doubt his credentials. When American Occupation officials asked to see his military identification - after all, he was a man in uniform - R' Silver stared defiantly and proclaimed, “I don’t need papers. I am the Chief Rabbi of the United States and Canada!” (It came out “United Shtates” in R' Laizer’s characteristic accent.) 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