## Parashat Shemot

Excerpt from *Yishmiru Da-at* by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

שמות Section "Shemot" (Exodus 2:11)

יירא איש מצרי "And he saw an Egyptian man striking a

"Hebrew man of his brethren מכה איש עברי מאחיו, (שמות ב' י"א).

משה רבינו ע"ה Moses, our teacher, (may he rest in peace),

while growing up in Egypt,

followed the conventional wisdom

put forth by the Egyptians

that everyone is rewarded or punished

לפי מעשיו, according to hir actions,

(and his thought processes were [somewhat]

shaped by [having had his education in]

Pharaoh's [own] elite schools).

ווה היום ראה But this day, he saw

מיהודי נענש ממצרי an Egyptian punish a Jew

שלא מפני שעשה who had not done

anything forbidden to slaves;

rather [it was a case of] one Jew

עושה איזה דבר doing a thing [for which s/he should have been punished]

and a second - one of hir Jewish brethren - being punished

for the former's guilty action.

דראה שבעיני העמים גם כן Thus Moshe saw that in the eyes of the nations, too,

כל ישראל ערבים "All Jews may be guarantors

one for another" (Shevuot 39a).

And so it happened that in all generations

there arose the conviction to concern oneself

עבערן של ישראל, with the troubles of Israel

ידי שמי שהוא סובל in the name of one who is suffering

רק על שהוא provided s/he is

– מאחיו של יהורי אחר one of hir other Jewish brethren -

and so it occurred to Theodor Herzl in Paris.

(Exodus 2:12) "And he turned this way and that" – שמות ב' י"ב) ויפן כ"ה וכ"ה i.e. kaf-heh v'kaf-heh, 25 + 25 = 50,25 + 25 היינו [he turned] to the 50 (nun) gates of Binah בנו"ן 50 שערי בינה, "And he saw that there was no man." וירא כי אין איש, The obligation came upon him (yatza mimenu) יצא ממנו שנחוץ הוא להעולם, that he was responsible for the world, just like the Rabbis said (peace upon them) כפי מאמרם ז"ל (cf Shemot Rabbah 1:29) (עיין שמות רבה א' כ"מ) "That no person was to come from him" כי אין איש (yatza mimenu), [i.e., from the one he smote].

(שמות ב' י"ד) מי שמך לאיש שר ושופט, והתבה 'איש' מיותרת פה. אלא שיוצא מזה ומעוד הוכחות אפשרות לחשוב שבכתב התורה בתחילה – כי לא הייתה כתובה אז בכתב אשורי אלא בכתב יתידות היה מין מלת יחם determinative שקוראים להורות שהמלה הבאה אח"כ מדברת על אישיות ולא על בית או ספינה.

יצא ממנו.

(Exodus 2:14) "Who made you a man, a prince and a judge [over us]?" And the word "ish" / "a man" is redundant here. However, we can extrapolate from this and provide a possible explanation by considering that in writing the torah initially it wasn't then in an Assyrian script, but rather in a Cuneiform script. And there was a kind of connecting word called "determinative" [in Cuneiform]. Thus we learn that the the word that follows afterwards emphasizes the character / *ish-iut* [of Moshe] and not a dynasty or ministry (lit. house or ship).

translation by Gabbai Seth Fishman