

www.JEPQUEENS.com
76-01 147 St | Flushing, NY



(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

THANK YOU??!!

PARSHAS KI SEITZEI

There is a famous story about a German gentile boy who grew up with his mother. He studied about the Holocaust and decided to travel to Israel to do more research at Yad Vashem. In Israel, he became attracted to Judaism and converted to Judaism. He was now known as Avraham. Avraham became engaged to a Jewish girl who had also converted. Avraham invited his mother to come from Germany to attend the wedding. Before the wedding, he persistently questioned his mother about his father. She finally told him the truth. His father was a former Gestapo agent who had murdered thousands and thousands of Jews. After the war, he was caught, tried, and sentenced to life in prison. Avraham was shocked beyond belief at this news. He told his mother that he never again wanted to hear about his father. A few years later, Avraham's mother called him and said that he must come to Germany immediately to see his father who had only weeks to live. At first, Avraham refused. Then, he said he would go on the condition that he could bring his two children with him. His children, with their peyos around their ears, would show his father that he had failed in his attempt to exterminate the Jewish People. Avraham's mother agreed. Avraham was exceedingly angry when he saw his father, a murderer of thousands. Finally, Avraham asked his father if he had ever done anything good. After all, why else would he have merited to have two Jewish grandchildren? His father replied that his job was to go into the Jewish section of towns and round up all the Jews, including women and children. He would have them brought to the center of town where they were shot to death. One time, his commander told him to check a barn behind a building. Avraham's father went inside the barn and noticed two sets of eyes peering at him from under a haystack. He realized that these were from Jewish children who were hiding. He told Avraham that for some unknown reason, which he still did not understand, he pretended that the children were not there. He told his commanding officer that there were no Jews in the barn, thus sparing their lives. Now Avraham understood why his evil father merited to have two Jewish grandchildren. (Rabbi Zecharya Wallerstein zt"l on [Torah Anytime.com](http://TorahAnytime.com))

The **Torah** says that we should not despise an Egyptian, "for you were a stranger in his land." (Devarim 23:8) Therefore, "Children who will be born to them, in the third generation, may enter into Hashem's community." (ibid:9) Only a third-generation Egyptian convert may marry a Jew. [The Torah mentions certain peoples who, if they convert to Judaism, are still forbidden to marry a Jew for a specified number of generations. **Rabbi Yosef ben Yitzchok Bekhor Shor** was a French tosafist of the 12th century. He points out that this law does not apply nowadays. While King Sancherev of Assyria was trying to conquer the world, he displaced nations. Each nation that he conquered, he moved out of their land to other countries. Eventually, it became difficult

"Do not despise the Edomite, for he is your brother; do not despise the Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land." (Devarim 23:8)

to know anyone's ancestry (other than the Jews), including who a true Egyptian was. Therefore, an Egyptian convert, as well as other converts, would be permitted to marry a Jew right away because of the Talmud's rule דכל דפריש כמרובא פריש].

Logically, we should hate Egyptians and never permit them to marry a Jew. After

all, the Egyptians were exceedingly cruel in the way that they subjugated us. They even threw our firstborn baby boys into the river to drown! Yet, the Torah says that the third generation of an Egyptian convert is permitted to marry a Jew. Why? **Rashi** says because the Egyptians hosted us in our time of need. **Rabbeinu Bachya** adds that the fact remains that at a crucial point in our history Egypt offered a home to our

people. They welcomed Yaakov's family and gave them food during the famine. **Da'as Zekanim** says that the Jews were welcome and well-treated residents in their country for many years.

The **Talmud** (Bava Kama 92B) brings Rava who asked Rabba bar Mari for the source of the statement, "If there is a well that you drank from, do not throw a stone into it." Rabba bar Mari said that the source is our pasuk! "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land". Since you dwelled in their lands, you may not cause them harm. We see from this the requirement that the Torah places upon us to show gratitude for favors done for us.

The Netziv says in **Ha'emek Davar** that this is a characteristic of a refined soul. It makes us better people when we pay back the good that is done to us. And for this reason, Hashem trained us with this mitzvah.

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l points out (Messages from Rav Pam by Rabbi Sholom Smith) that the Egyptian hospitality lasted for a long period of time, for almost 100 years. With Pharaoh's permission, Yosef settled his family in the city of Goshen. The Jewish People multiplied from 70 people to a nation of millions. Out

of gratitude for that, we accept their 3rd generation converts in marriage to a Jew.

We learn something very important from this. **A small measure of good is not discounted by a large measure of bad (and vice versa).** Although the Jews suffered greatly at the hands of the Egyptians, we can not overlook the years that they showed us much kindness.

Rabbi Pam zt"l takes this idea to teach us an important lesson for life. If someone does you a favor, you owe him a debt of gratitude. Even if that person stops helping you or causes you pain, you are still obligated to show him gratitude! **At times, friends and even spouses get angry at one another because of one rude remark or thoughtless action. What about all the good that they have done? We are not permitted to forget all that good! We should focus on the good that they have done for us and minimize our focus on the bad. If we take this lesson to heart, peace will flourish, and we will be happier!**

Rav Dessler zt"l (quoted in Talelei Oros by Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rubin) adds that if we must show gratitude to the Egyptians, then consider **how much greater is our obligation to show gratitude to those who do favors for us without causing us any suffering!**

It is a mitzvah to maintain an attitude of gratitude! That attitude will bring us much happiness in life.

Dedicated in memory of Moshe Shimon ben Dov Berish.

May this be an aliya for his Neshama.

Sponsored In Memory of: Mindel Adina bat Natan Zvi; Shmuel ben Eliezer Lipa; Shirley Shaindel Yaffa bat Yehuda Shmuel; Hadassah bas Yaakov; Faiga bat Pinchas; Yaakov ben Yeshayahu; Gershon ben Hillel; Gita bat Gershon; Rav Chaim Dov Weissmandl ben Rav Yoseph; Shraga Fayvel Leb ben Shmuel Abraham; Moshe ben Yitzchok; Sarah Vital bas Avrohom Yitzchok; R' Yisroel ben R' Yaakov, Zichronam Livracha.

Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

To receive these weekly divrei Torah by email, send a request to jepqueens@gmail.com