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לזכר נשמת הבחור ישראל איסר בן ר׳ יעקב ז״ל. בן ישיבה סבל יסורים ונקטף בדמי ימיו כ״ט טבת תשס״ג

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.
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Anti-semitism

The Egyptians had a "Jewish problem." They were afraid of the Jewish immigrants taking over the country. They ignored all of the benefits that the country had gained by having Yosef as their leader navigate them through some tumultuous years. They certainly forgot how Yaakov stopped the Great Famine. They had too many insecurities to be able to properly deal with reality.

They proceeded slowly in their schemes to rid themselves of the Jewish population. First, they enacted labor laws in which the Jewish population was forced to work for the state. Then they secretly tried infanticide—by commanding the midwives to kill all of the newborn boys.

Part of their paranoia was based on the astrologers who were correctly predicting a great savior being born to the Jewish people. At a certain point, the astrologers realized that the savior was going to be born. Therefore, Pharaoh ordered that "every son that is born should be thrown into the Nile and drowned immediately" (*Shemos* 1:22).

Rashi explains that this decree was against the entire Egyptian population, whether Jewish or not. Why would they make such a decree against their own people?

This was because the astrologers were unsure if the savior-baby was a Jewish or an Egyptian child. The reason for the uncertainty was that Moshe Rabbeinu was, of course, a Jew, but he

was raised in an Egyptian household. Moshe's upbringing created a lack of clarity in seeing the future. To guarantee results they ordered that "every son that is born should be thrown into the Nile and drowned immediately."

This is Rashi's explanation.

TARGUM

The Targum disagrees and states that this decree was limited to the Jewish male children

ר׳ יהודה מאיר שפירא

Rav Yehudah Meir Shapiro (7 Adar 1887 – 7 Cheshvan 1933) was a follower of R' Yisrael Chortkova and a leader of the Agudas Harabbanim. He was a Rav in Galina (1911-1920), Sanik (1920-1924), Petrakov (1924-1931) and Lublin. In 1923 he initiated the concept of *Daf Yomi* – the Chofetz Chaim (1:18) called him "Rav Daf Yomi." He was the visionary behind Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, which had over 50,000 attendees at its official opening in 1924. He took great pride in these two significant achievements. Rav Wosner quoted his Rebbi, saying that Rav Shapiro fulfilled the obligation to have children through the two creations of *Daf Yomi* and Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin.
In 1958, he was reburied in Har HaMenuchot with a full ceremony. R' Yitzchok Meir Levin delivered a eulogy, as did those students of his who had survived the Holocaust.

who were born, and not against the entire Egyptian population (כל ברא דיתיליד **ליהודאי** בנהרא תרמנה).

The question becomes: If the *passuk* doesn't specify that the decree was limited to the Jewish children who were born, how does the Targum reach this conclusion?

PUBLIC DECLARATION

Rav Meir Shapiro humorously explains that while Pharaoh had full control to make any decree he wanted, he also understood that it would not look particularly sensible, judicious, or appropriate if he made a genocidal ruling against a specific portion of the people under his authority. Therefore, he publicly issued a public decree against everybody—including the Egyptians—but, of course, privately, in a secret memorandum, he instructed his officers that this was only to be enacted against the Jewish boys. This is why the Targum (in a secret language) wrote the truth.

Rabbi Meir adds that this has been going on since the time of Pharaoh: government decrees do not appear on the surface to be anti-Semitic, but privately, when they are fully examined, the decrees are, in truth, directed against the Jewish people.

Reb Meir is cited as adding, "Because Onkelos was a convert, he had inside knowledge of the inner workings of government decrees. He knew that public declarations are not always accurate in identifying the true purpose of a decree." Onkelos, who authored the Targum, revealed to us that Pharaoh's public statement of "all babies" really meant all the Jewish babies.

NATIONAL TREASURES

Rav Aharon Cohen offers another reason for how the Targum understood from the words of the Torah that the decree was really directed only against Jewish babies.

He notes that the public declaration stated, "every *ben* who is born," when it would have made more sense to declare, "every *zachar* who is born."

The word "*ben*," interpreted as "son," might limit the decree to a child that has a father, while "*zachar*" (male) would apply to all male babies, whether orphaned or not. Why use the more limiting terminology, which could lead to excluding certain male babies from the decree when, ostensibly, the decree was against all male baby boys?

Rav Aharon explains that the terminology was meant to hint that the decree was only directed against the Jewish people. This is because each Jewish child who is born automatically becomes a child of the entire nation — Regardless of whether it's a boy or a girl, orphaned or not. Every *ben* the moment he is born, becomes a son of the entire nation. Therefore, since the decree was against each "*ben*," it must be referring to the Jewish babies. An Egyptian baby is never referred to as a "*ben*," only as a "*zachar*" (male).

It might not always appear to us that we should continue to *daven* for Hashem's constant help, but that is because what we see, is not the full picture.

ר' אהרן כהן
R' Aharon Cohen

(10 Nisan 1904–18 Sivan 1961). Born in Kovno (Lithuania), where his grandfather, R' Yosef Cohen (1834–1883), had served as Rav. In 1919, he joined Yeshivah Knesses Yisrael, then temporarily located in Kremenchuk, Ukraine, due to the WWI upheavals. When the Yeshivah returned to Slabodka in 1921, R' Aharon followed, gaining fame as "the Iluy R' Archik Kovner." After three years, he emigrated with Slabodka students to Palestine, transplanting Knesses Yisrael in Chevron. In spring 1929, he married Tzivia Tzirel ('Tzila') Epstein (1905–1986), daughter of R' Moshe Mordechai (1866–1933), Rosh Yeshivah of Knesses Yisrael. Two months later, they survived the Chevron massacre, after which the Yeshivah relocated to Yerushalayim. After R' Moshe Mordechai's passing, R' Aharon delivered shiurim alongside his brothers in-law, R' Yechezkel Sarna (1890–1969) and R' Moshe Chevroni (1905–1975).