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Sunday, February 27, 2011
9:00 am - 1:15 pm
The CTN Center
2832 West Touhy Avenue, Chicago, [view map](#)
1:15 - 2:00 PM Optional light lunch and question & answer session



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THE CHICAGO TORAH NETWORK SHABBAT FAX[©]

A WEEKLY PRESENTATION OF JEWISH THOUGHT PUBLISHED IN MEMORY OF RAE DANIEL

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 13 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2010 / 24 TEVES 5771 CANDLE LIGHTING: 4:09 P.M. SHABBAT ENDS: 5:20 (CHICAGO)

Hang in there - Shabbos is coming!

TORAH PORTION: VO'AYRA (EXODUS 6:2 - 9:35)

This week's CTN Shabbat Fax is sponsored by the Mirkin family in honor of Rabbi Doni and Esti Deutsch and Rabbi Moshe and Bracha Katz. Thank you for your tremendous dedication and for all that you and CTN have done for us and for so many others!

1. I am G-d. I will take you out from ... Egypt and free you from their slavery ... I will take you to Myself as a nation and I will be to you as a G-d. (6:6-7)

The Exodus. G-d took us out of Egypt. And made us free.

... But did that gift of freedom really last?

After all, for so much of our history we have not been free at all.

We had no land of our own. No control over our destiny. And we suffered tremendously.

So why did we always make such a big deal about the Exodus?

... The answer to this question is a very important lesson.

About what freedom really is.

... *Because people can have everything – and still not be free.*

If they don't understand that human beings are created in G-d's Image.

If they're not committed to a moral and ethical life.

Then they remain slaves to their desires.

And are not free at all.

... The freedom of the Exodus was not just from being slaves to Pharaoh.

It was the Torah we received at Mount Sinai. The values. The mission.

And the sense of purpose in life.

Those are what made us truly free.

... *And that is a freedom that we never lost.*

▪ **It was in the former Soviet Union. In a work camp for refuseniks.**

Yosef Mendelovich decides to make a yarmulke. And to wear it all the time.

The KGB Colonel in charge was infuriated. He opened the flap of his holster.

"If you don't take that thing off, I will kill you."

Mendelovich kept it on.

"If you are going to kill me, do so. But I am not afraid of you.

And I will not take it off."

The Colonel screamed at him: "Aren't you afraid of death?"

Mendelovich answered calmly: "No I am not.

Because I know that death comes from the hands of the Creator.

But you think it comes from Brezhnev. So you are terrified of it."

... Isn't it amazing? How someone can be a prisoner of the KGB.

And still be free!

2. G-d spoke to Moshe saying: Go speak to Pharaoh, King of Egypt ... These are the children of Levi (Jacob's son): Gershon, Kehas ... And Kehas had a son Amram ... Amram married Yocheved ... And she gave birth to Aaron and Moshe ... (6:16 - 20)

Moshe is about to speak to Pharaoh. "Let my people go". But first the Torah does something a little strange. It seems to interrupt the story.

To discuss Moshe's family. His genealogy. *In detail.*

... Sure, it's nice to know. But why is it so important?

And why here?

Jewish tradition says that it's teaching us such an important lesson.

... Moshe is about to begin his mission.

To free the Jews. And ultimately, to change the world.

G-d will speak to him. And through him.

Moshe will teach the world ethics. Morality. And values.

And he's also going to do some pretty amazing things.

Like splitting the sea. Bringing *manna* (miraculous food) from heaven. And more.

Just think how easily Moshe could have been turned into some kind of G-d.

... *Except that the Torah will not let it happen.*

And that's why from day one, the Torah makes it very clear.

Moshe was a human being. He was born like anybody else.

We know his mother and father. His aunts and uncles.

Yes, he was great. But not super human.

Which is important to know, not just for philosophers.

But for each and every one of us.

Moshe was human. He had challenges just like we have.

But he made himself great.

... Which is why three thousand years later he continues to inspire us.



Shabbat Shalom and best wishes for a wonderful week.

Rabbi Moshe Katz

Rabbi Doni Deutsch

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