

This Overlooked Tool Undergirds the Supernatural

The book of Exodus will begin to be read this week in synagogues around the world. Exodus is one of the most exciting books in Torah as it covers the events from the enslavement of Israel and the birth of Moses to the deliverance of Israel by G-D through the plagues, the crossing of the Red (Reed) Sea, the gathering of Israel around the mountain to receive the Torah, and the journey of Israel through the wilderness to the banks of the Jordan.

In all of this excitement, it is often missed that the book of Exodus begins with the following words:

“Now these are the names of Bnei-Yisrael who came into Egypt with Jacob, each man with his family.”

While in English, this second book of the Torah is called Exodus, the Hebrew name for the book is Shemot, or “Names.” For most people reading the Bible, the focus or major theme of this book tends to be the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egypt. However, the book does not begin with the words, “Now, here is how G-D delivered the Children of Israel from Egypt.” No. The book begins with the notation of the names of the children of Israel by their family.

It is always interesting how often the main theme of an event in Scripture is missed because we read the words based upon what we think is the most important part. For instance, the story of Noah is almost always discussed as being about Noah and the Ark. Yet, the Scripture concerning Noah begins this way:

Genesis 6:8 says, “But Noah found favor in the eyes of Adonai. These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man and blameless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with God.”

The main theme of the story of Noah from G-D's perspective is that Noah found favor or grace in G-D's eyes. It then continues speaking about Noah's family.

In the Bible, almost every major event or person spoken about in the Bible is first spoken of as related to his or her family or genealogy. After the Scripture establishes them by their family, we read about whatever exciting event or miracles took place in their lives. However, Bible readers almost always breeze through the verses naming names or mentioning genealogies and families to dig into the meat of the stories. The readers are looking for the supernatural and spectacular, the mind-blowing amazing miracles of G-D. Yet, in skipping the names and genealogical references, we pass by the miracle that G-D deems most important: the family.

In G-D's view, the most important and miraculous thing that happens in any story or event in the Bible is the family. Every miracle takes place because the family exists. In truth, the supernatural exists only because of the miracle of family. And all prophecy was spoken or written because of the miracle of the family.

Said another way, it is because of the miracle of the family mentioned in Exodus 1:1 that every other event in the book takes place. We read about the lesser miracles because of the greater miracle. Family is the miracle of the Bible and the greatest miracle of all miracles is that because of the miracle of family, we get to be part of the family of G-D.
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