SHEMOT: A story of Brotherhood and Envy

We finished the book of Bereshit. And this week we start the book of Shemot. The story is more or less known. Bereshit tells how the first Jewish "family", *bene Israel*, was formed, while the book of Shemot tells us how the Jewish "people", *'am Israel*, was formed.

The Tora is not a simple book. Among the things that make the Tora a unique book is that "behind" the main plot you can find hidden sub-stories interwoven with the main plot, but somehow independent of it. I will show you one. The story of Brotherhood vs. Envy

The tension between brothers is already evident from the beginning, Cain and Abel. In this case, envy is generated by looking for Divine attention. HaShem accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's. And Cain, instead of striving to do it better, as his creator suggested, decided it was easier to kill (literally!) the competition.

Twenty generations later, Yishma'el, according to the Midrash, tried to kill his brother Isaac, Abraham's favorite.

The children of Isaac, Ya'aqob and Esav, who were twins, compete from the womb for the birthright. After what happened with the blessing of Isaac, Esav threatened Ya'aqob with death. In the end there is a reconciliation between the brothers, but for the brotherhood to be maintained, the brothers, ironically, have to live apart from each other.

The point of highest tension between brothers comes with the sons of Ya'aqob. Yosef, who enjoys the favor of his father, awakens the envy of his brothers. And this envy is transformed into hatred. And this hatred, into planning the murder of Yosef. In the end, they sell Yosef as a slave, a virtual death sentence.

Twenty years later, the brothers expressed their remorse for what they did and in a huge act of altruism Yosef forgives

them. And thus, apparently, the cycle of envy and resentment between brothers, which began with the first inhabitants of the planets, comes a to closure. But Bereshit is not finished yet. And the story of brotherhood continues. But now it improves The last brothers to be mentioned in Bereshit are the sons of Yosef: Ephraim and Menashe. For the first time it is the grandfather and not the father who assigns the birthright and decides to whom it belongs. Ya'aqob blesses them "putting Efraim, the youngest, before the older, Menashe."

And when it seems that the wounds are going to reopen, and that Menashe is going to threaten, kill or sell Efraim … none of that happens. Menashe, despite having a valid reason to envy his brother, lives in peace with him. For the first time the love between brothers overcame the power of envy. Menashe successfully passes the test of fraternal envy and the book of Bereshit ends (for this reason, by the way, we bless our children with the blessing of Ephraim and Menashe, wishing them to be good children and also good siblings) .

Now a new book begins, Shemot. Which also has sub-stories interwoven with the main story. The main story tells that Moshe is assigned as the envoy of HaShem to rescue Israel from captivity. Moshe asks for help for his mission and HaShem sends him as his assistant… his brother Aharon! This is a big potential problem Aharon is the older brother. And according to the norms of those days, the older should be the leader of the family, for whatever was necessary …. Now instead, Aharon is going to be Moshe's assistant, his shadow …

We all suspect now that envy will overcome brotherhood. The most optimistic might assume that Aharon is not going to get angry. Following the steps of Menashe, he will control his envy.But the Tora has a beautiful surprise reserved for us.The reaction of Aharon was unprecedented, and shows us the best of the humankind. Aharon not only that he does not envy the position of Moshe. ***Aharon is happy for Moshe*** □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□,

"And when Aharon sees you, he will rejoice in his heart."

The book of Bereshit began with fratricide: one brother

killing the other. But with Menashe brotherhood evolved into harmony. What could be higher than the acceptance of the other’s success? Aharon changes the history of sibling rivalry by 180 degrees. And taught us one of the most beautiful lessons in life: learn to rejoice for the success of your brother. Be happy for another person’s happiness.