



## A Double Edged Sword

### Parshas Shemos

#### Leilui Neshmas Meira Chaya Nechama Bracha A"H

#### Bat David Mordechai V'Zelda Shaindel Sheychu

It was announced in Jerusalem that "A leader is coming"; Rabbi Dov of Tshebin, a survivor of the Holocaust and then Siberia, was on his way to Israel. Everyone in Jerusalem was very excited.

My father, Rabbi Yisroel Grossman, had learned that Rabbi Dov was to meet with a Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Dushinskaya. My father was his student, and decided to be present at the meeting. Rabbi Dushinskaya discovered at the beginning of the meeting that he and Rav Dov had met before, during the War, "Thank G-d for saving you", he said.

Much was discussed during the meeting. Rabbi Dushinskaya mentioned the story of the crowning of the Chief Rabbi of Cracow in 1861. The Jewish community had split, and there was a thorough search for a real leader, and many offered themselves for the position. The first test was to give a sermon at the main Beis Midrash in Cracow. This was a difficult test, as the community was very learned and held very high standards. They would do all they could to trip up the candidates. One candidate, Rabbi Shimon Sofer heard of this, and when he ascended the pulpit he commenced with a story about his father. "My father when he was the Rabbi of Preshburg, heard that one of the *Shochtim*, a butcher, was selling non-Kosher meat. My father sent an emissary to warn him and ask him to meet with my father. The *Shochet* refused and threatened the emissary. The emissary fled the scene, but father asked him to return and invite him again. The emissary returned and was viciously attacked by the butcher. My father saw this and was deeply pained. He called me and gave me a holy name, telling me to go to the butcher, and said: "If you are attacked by the butcher put your hand on the Mezuzah and say this holy name."

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In our weekly parsha we read about Moshe who grew up in the house of Pharaoh. "The child grew up, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became like her son. She named him Moshe, and she said, "For I drew him from the water." Now it came to pass in those days that Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers and looked at their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers. He turned this way and that way, and he saw that there was no man; so he struck the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."<sup>1</sup> The Torah does not tell us how he killed the Egyptian.

The next day the following happened: "He went out on the second day, and behold, two Hebrew men were quarreling, and he said to the wicked one, "Why are you going to strike your friend? And he retorted, "Who made you a man, a prince, and a judge over us? Do you **say** to slay me as you have slain the Egyptian?" "<sup>2</sup> Our sages teach us: "Do you **say** to slay me- From here we learn that he slew him with the ineffable Name."



Pharaoh learned of this immediately: "Pharaoh heard of this incident, and he sought to slay Moshe." Our sages explain – "He delivered him to the executioner to execute him, but the sword had no power over him." This is odd, for Moshe grew up in the house of Pharaoh, why did Pharaoh want to kill him, basing his decision on a mere rumor?

The Chidah teaches us that after Pharaoh heard the Moshe had slain the man in an unusual fashion; using a Holy name -a double edged sword, he became frightened and wished to kill Moshe out of the fear that Moshe might kill him as well.

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Rabbi Shimon Sofer gazed at the crowd and continued his story: "I did as I was told by my father and went to the butcher. The butcher was enraged and came to attack me. I put my hand on the Mezuzah and said the Holy Name. The butcher dropped dead."

He then turned to the gathering: "If you are waging war for the sake of Torah I will hear you out. But if you are being spiteful - know that I have the Holy Name with me."

'The fear of G-d was stricken into the hearts of the Jews of Cracow", Rabbi Dushinskaya concluded his story. Rabbi Sofer served as the city rabbi for twenty years and became a world-wide renowned scholar.

<sup>1</sup> Shmot 2:10 – 12.

<sup>2</sup> Shmot 2:13 – 14.