

Preface to Ideas: Shemot

When I first considered publishing a series on the weekly Torah portion, I estimated that I would write and release a volume every two years or so. However, the positive and global reception which the first volume on *Bereshit* was met with has ultimately led me to shorten that gap. And here we are again, just six months after the first one.

In this second volume on *Shemot*, not much has changed. The ultimate objective of this series remains the same: to present Torah as the lens through which we view and interact with reality – rather than as a wall to blind ourselves and isolate from it. It is for this reason that I have updated the first two chapters of the first volume, *Introduction* and *The Context*, and included them in this second volume. These chapters enjoyed most of the attention and praise, as they delved into some of the major intellectual and experiential challenges that I believe our people face, within a historical context that unfortunately still rings true today. The rest of this volume continues where the last volume left off, with essays expounding on the weekly Torah portions by “*accepting the truth, regardless of the source*” – the modus operandi of our cherished *hakhamim*.

In our strange and sterile world, however, much *has* changed. That tiny protein with a crown on its head has still got the world turned on its head. Yet, the distinct and divine feature of Homo sapiens (*adam*) – the intellect – has helped formulate several vaccines that promise us a return to some semblance of normalcy.

The irony of our current situation is overwhelming. The gluttonous lust we all recently had for a time-machine to take us to the future has suddenly been replaced with a humbling wish to simply return to the past. As emotions and markets continue to ride a relentless rollercoaster they did not line up for, the hubris of modern man has been humbled.

The new currency of this new era is something that Yisrael recite and internalise every single day – gratitude.

מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לְךָ שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד
*We give thanks to You, that You are the Lord our God, and God of
our ancestors, forever and ever.*

Sina Kahen

London, England

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