

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

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GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Embracing the Challenge


THE MIDRASH (*SHEMOS RABBAH* 1, 8) DEDUCES A very interesting point at the beginning of this week's *parasha*. The *passuk* (1, 6) repeats the deaths of Yosef, his brothers, and the entire generation that went down to Mitzrayim to tell us that as long as any one of the individuals who were part of the original group who came to Mitzrayim were still alive, the Mitzrim did not subjugate Bnei Yisroel; the subjugation only started after they had already passed on.

Why? Is there any particular reason for this? But more so, what was the reason for the subsequent generation's inability in preventing the *golus* of Mitzrayim to come into full force?

If we look back to when the Torah relates that Yaakov and his household originally went down to Mitzrayim, we can make an interesting observation. The *passuk* in *Bereishis* says (46, 7) "His sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his daughters' sons and all his descendants, he brought with him to Mitzrayim." Why does the Torah break up Yaakov's descendants into different groups, his sons' progeny in one group and his daughters' progeny and the rest of his descendants in another? The *Ohr Hachayim* there explains that these two groups are delineated to tell us that there were two distinct perspectives they had when going down to Mitzrayim: everyone

knew that they were going down to Mitzrayim and were about to start the *golus* that was foretold to happen to Bnei Yisroel. The first group went willingly, understanding that this was the Will of the *Ribbono Shel Olam* while the others did not go willingly and tried to delay their journey. The first group (his sons and their children) were the ones who went down willingly, while the second group (his daughters and their children) did not. This is why the *passuk* iterates for the last group that Yaakov brought them, to tell us that they were unwilling to go on their own.


The *Ohr Hachayim* then writes that because the first group went down willingly, embracing their situation as the *Ratzon Hashem*, the subjugation never started with them! Only after those individuals passed on did the real *golus* start and affect the second group. This group's inability to accept their situation actually jump-started the more severe part of *golus* Mitzrayim. One need not look beyond Yocheved and Serach, the daughters of the *shevatim* who were among the second group and, unfortunately, did live through the subjugation.

As humans, we will inevitably feel at various points in our lives that our current situations can and should be different. We may even go to great lengths to try to change them. However, we see from here that efforts need not be made to *change* our challenges, but rather, to *embrace* them. Knowing that we are living our lives in the *Ratzon Hashem* and embracing the fact that He has specially chosen us to be in these particular situations goes a long way, not only in growing from our challenges, but to even mitigate them altogether! 

A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

In this week's *parasha*, Person A is missing his normal title and Person B is given that title. Who are they?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

Reuven went to buy a lottery ticket for himself. On the way, he met Shimon, who was also on the way to buy a ticket. Reuven suggested that they make a deal: Each of them would buy a ticket, and they would resolve to split the money between themselves if one of them should win. Shimon agreed to the deal.

After the drawing, Reuven came to Shimon and exclaimed, "Mazel Tov! Our ticket won!" "How do you know?" asked Shimon. Reuven said, "I marked down your numbers, and I saw that your numbers won the highest prize."

Shimon clucked his tongue and told Reuven, "The truth is, when I bought the ticket, I never meant to partner with you, and, therefore, all the winnings are mine!"

"I'm so glad to hear that," Reuven responded, "Really my ticket won, and I just caught you saying that you never intended to buy with me, so, our partnership is absolved, and I will keep everything for myself!"

Q May Reuven keep all the money?

A First, we must determine if Shimon is believed to say that he bought the ticket for himself and not as a partner. Seemingly, he isn't believed. Even had he bought it for himself figuring that if his friend would win he would split, but if he would win, he would keep it all, we would demand a split if Shimon won. See Rema (*C.M.* 183:2) regarding those who act with trickery are not believed if they say they acted differently from a mutual agreement.

Based on this, had Shimon won, Reuven

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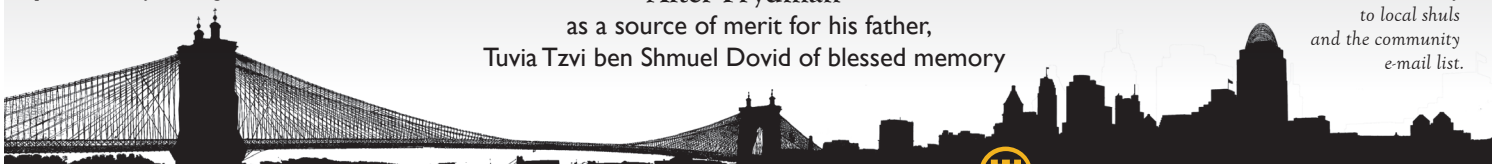
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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

A FAMILY THAT HAD BEEN LIVING IN THE SOVIET Union decided, after the fall of the Soviet Union, to immigrate to America. Although the parents had never even told their daughter that they were in fact Jewish, and had even attended a church back in the Soviet Union, when they found it hard to make ends meet, they turned to a Jewish organization for assistance. The assistance came with the stipulation that they had to send their daughter to a Jewish school. Much to the chagrin of the parents, their daughter loved learning about her Judaism and grew more observant. As she grew older, her parents became more and more vocal about their displeasure with her new path in life. One day when she was fourteen, as she took a walk in her neighborhood, a car hit a light pole in front her, causing the pole to come crashing down on her. The pole had her arm pinned down underneath it. She blacked out and upon waking found herself in the hospital with her arm having been amputated. Her father standing next to her lit into her. "This is what your G-d does for you! You fight to keep Shabbat and eat kosher food and this is how G-d repays you!?" She took a deep breath and replied to her father, "if I understood everything G-d does then I would be him. I don't have to understand everything." With those strong words and strong faith, she held strong through her tragedy to continue living a committed Jewish life. 🕊

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

would have been able to demand half the money. Therefore, now that Reuven won, he should have to give half the winnings to Shimon.

However, it may be that even if Shimon is not believed, nevertheless, Reuven doesn't have to give Shimon his portion.

The agreement to split was meant to be only in a peaceful fashion, and if the way for Reuven to get his half from Shimon would be through tremendous hassle, he would never have agreed in advance to split the shares. Nevertheless, Reuven should give Shimon at least some of the winnings (see *Sdei Chemed* 2, p. 190). 🕊

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

With the influx of eastern European Jewry starting in the 1880s, there were eminent Torah scholars that began to immigrate as well. When Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Grodzinsky immigrated to the United States in 1891, he shunned the larger centers of Jewish life in the bigger cities to take up a position in Omaha, NE. He wanted to live in a smaller community that would afford him more time for Torah learning. In fact, he left a prodigious amount of Torah writings that were left unpublished in his lifetime. Even though he lived outside the larger centers of Jewish life, he was well known and well respected by his peers throughout America, Europe, and Israel. Some Torah scholars are even quoted as saying his Torah scholarship was on par with his more famous second-cousin, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, who was a leader of European Jewry until his death in 1940. He was a regular contributor to the rabbinical journals of his day that dealt with contemporary issues [such as if a man is let out of jail only to write a get (document of Halachic divorce), would that be considered a forced get, which is invalid] as well as his responsa on many thorny topics are still relevant and studied until today. 🕊

SOURCE: Rosenbaum, Jonathan & Wakshlag, Myron. *Maintaining Tradition: A Survey of the Life and Writings of Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Grodzinsky, American Jewish History*, Vol. 82, No. 1/4 (1994), pp. 263-288, Johns Hopkins University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23885665>.

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