

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### True Greatness

Greatness. Leadership.

Many qualities may be conjured up in our minds when we think of these two traits.

Powerful. Capable. Motivator. Piety. Knowledgeable.

What are the true characteristics of a leader? What really is greatness all about?


Moshe *Rabbeinu* was perhaps the greatest leader of the Jewish people – from their servitude in Egypt to the creation of *Am Yisroel*, receiving the Torah, and guiding them for forty years in the desert. What about Moshe was so special that he was chosen for this task?

One of Rambam's 13 principles of faith is that Moshe *Rabbeinu* was the greatest prophet who ever has and ever will live. Moshe was the only one who spoke to Hashem "face to face." Why did he merit to have this special relationship with Hashem?

The Torah relates to us very little about the qualities of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. The only outright description it provides is that "he was the humblest amongst all men." In this week's *parasha* we gain additional insight into the greatness of Moshe. After describing Moshe's rescue from the Nile River by Pharaoh's daughter and growing up in the king's palace, the Torah introduces us to Moshe's adulthood as follows: "It happened in those days Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and observed their burdens." The Torah continues to relate three episodes in which Moshe was attentive to someone in need – first the Jew being beaten by the Egyptian, then a Jew hitting another Jew, and finally coming to the aid of Yisro's daughters who weren't allowed to water their camels with the other shepherds of Midyan. Rashi explains that Moshe did

not go out to tour the country to simply see and observe what was going on, rather "he focused his eyes and heart to be distressed over them." Moshe went out to feel and to join in the pain of his fellow Jews. Moshe grew up in the palace and was living in the lap of luxury, but he left those comforts because of his care and concern for his fellow man. This is what the Torah is referring to with the words "*vayigdal Moshe*" – he became great. The Midrash explains that this is the reason that Moshe merited a special relationship with Hashem. "Hashem says, you left your place to see in the pain of the Jewish people, I too will leave my abode to speak with you. Therefore, Hashem called out to Moshe from the burning bush."

This sensitivity, care for others, and ability to see beyond his own needs and desires is the description that the Torah gives us in introducing the ultimate leader of the Jewish people. The humility of Moshe that the Torah describes is rooted in the same quality. The ability to recognize and prioritize needs beyond and greater than himself is what Hashem saw as the potential for his greatest subordinate. It was not that Moshe didn't recognize his extraordinary strengths and value, but that they paled in comparison to a larger concept in his life – the will of Hashem. It was for this reason that Moshe was the one to merit the greatest prophecies ever.

Our society at large focuses on self-fulfillment and doesn't lend itself to this mentality. We might not be Moshe *Rabbeinu* and can't expect God to appear to us in a burning bush, but we all have a friend, family member, or neighbor who would love a phone call or text, or would simply appreciate being noticed and cared for. Let's exercise true greatness. 



RABBI  
SHALOM  
ZEHNWIRTH

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH  
RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Q) How does someone have the temerity to tell Hashem that he does not want to carry out the mission Hashem picked him for when Hashem tells the person himself! What was Moshe thinking?

The Ramban explains that Moshe was "*Onov Mikol Odom*" – the most humble person. He honestly believed that anybody else that Hashem would send would be more qualified than he. Moshe's argument "send someone else" was not said out of negativity, laziness, or to shirk responsibility, but out of modesty. Working with this theme, there are several other suggestions amongst the *Rishonim* as to why Moshe felt others were more qualified.

- Since I am not fit to bring them into Eretz Yisroel, the one who will get that job and be appointed to do so, will probably be more worthy to take them out and act as their leader throughout. (According to Targum Yonasan Ben Uriel, Moshe was referring to Pinchas / Eliyahu, who will redeem the Jewish nation at the end of times.)
- It is not appropriate or honorable for someone who has a speech impediment to represent the almighty, and he was concerned of *chillul Hashem* (desecration of G-d's name).
- Moshe was worried about the dignity of his older brother, Aaron, who had already been a prophet for 80 years at that point and might be slighted that he was overlooked for this role.

Regardless of how one understands Moshe *Rabbeinu's* reasoning, Harav Moshe Sternbuch, *shlita*, (*Ta'am Va'das*)

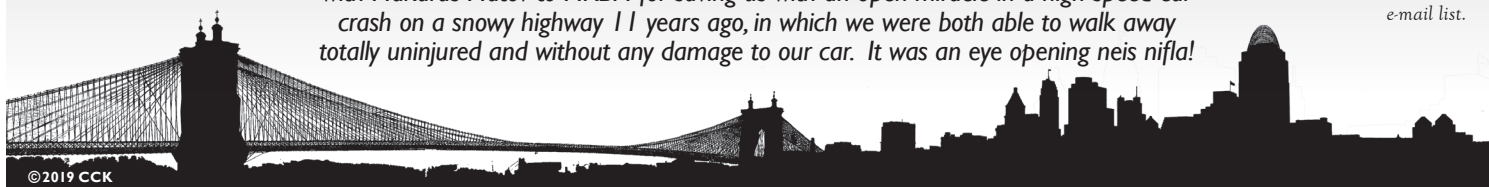
➡ CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE ➡

Sponsorship & feedback:  
parasha@cincynollel.org

Sponsored by  
Shua and Amanda Pransky

with Hakaras Hatov to HKBH for saving us with an open miracle in a high speed car crash on a snowy highway 11 years ago, in which we were both able to walk away totally uninjured and without any damage to our car. It was an eye opening *neis nifla*!

Cincinnati Torah  
is distributed weekly  
to local shuls  
and the community  
e-mail list.



## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

points out that the message to us is clear. We are talking about Moshe, who was chosen to lead us, carry out the *makkos* (plagues), receive the Torah on our behalf, and about whom the Torah testifies was the greatest prophet ever to live. Yet Moshe felt that others are more worthy than him. When we look at ourselves, our sins and shortcomings, it "should" be easy to remain humble! Q) Why did Moshe go and ask permission from Yisro, his father-in-law, to return to Mitzrayim. If Hashem told him to return, why go for a second opinion?

A) Rashi addresses this question with a *Medresh* saying that Moshe promised Yisro he would not leave Midyan without seeking his permission first.

The Alter of Slabodka offers a different approach. Here we see Moshe's character trait of *hakaras hatov* (expressing gratitude) for all of us to learn from. Yisro was the one who saved him while fleeing from Egypt, allowed him to stay in the house, and raised Tzipora, Moshe's wife, so out of *derech erez* (proper behavior) it was fitting to approach him to keep him in the loop, so to speak, and give him the proper respect.

The Alter ends by saying that this behavior of giving respect and honoring another is what made Moshe into a *manhig* (leader). Someone who thinks only of himself makes a poor leader,

## A SHINING EXAMPLE

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel addressed the annual Agudas Israel *Yarchei Kallah* (Torah learning convention) in Israel. Though he was debilitated by the Parkinsons disease that ravaged his body, just as in regards to everything else in his life, he did not let it deter him. After he had spoken and had been escorted out of the room, the next person due to address the crowd was the well-known speaker, Rav Don Segal. Seeing how Rav Finkel was able to ignore his difficulties and not only shoulder the responsibilities of heading the Mir Yeshiva but also to make time in weakened state for others blew him away, and instead of his prepared address, he shared something else instead. "Do you know what you just saw?" said Rav Segal. "Let me tell you a story. It once happened that Rav Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik, also known as the Brisker Rav, was told of a *yeshiva* student in a dire situation and called a man who he knew had the contacts to help the *yeshiva* student, even though it was Erev Yom Kippur, and asked the man to take care of it right away. "After Yom Kippur, I can do it," said the man. "You can do it today but you don't want to," answered Rav Soloveitchik. "No one is available today! It's the day before Yom Kippur! There is no way to talk to someone today!" "You can, you just don't want!" answered Rav Soloveitchik again.

while someone who puts others ahead of himself has leadership qualities. 🤖

*Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! If you would like to submit a question on the parasha, please email it to [parasha@cincykollel.org](mailto:parasha@cincykollel.org). Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.*

## A BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

On the *passuk* that tells us of Amram, Moshe's father, returning to remarry Yocheved, the Torah uses the words "*vayeilech ish*," meaning a man went. The other place that we find the words "*vayeilech ish*" is the beginning of the *megillah* of Ruth, where it begins "*vayeilech ish miBeis Lechem Yehuda*," a man left from Beis Lechem in Yehuda. The connection, explains *Ba'al Haturim*, is that just as the *vayeilech*, the going, of Amram led to the birth of the redeemer of the Jewish people, so too the *vayeilech* of the man from Beis Lechem will lead to the birth of the eventual redeemer, Mashiach of Davidic lineage, from the current exile. 🤖

Yaakov ben Asher, known as the *Ba'al Haturim*, was a scholar and biblical commentator who lived most of his life in Spain from approximately 1275 to approximately 1340. His classic commentary is printed in many editions of the *Chumash*.

Exasperated the man told Rav Soloveitchik that he would try, and in the end was successful. Rav Segal asked, "How did the Brisker Rav know it was possible to do and the only reason why it wouldn't work is because of a lack of will? Because whenever we do anything, it is all the Master of the World that orchestrates it. What does a person furnish? The will to do! If we have the will to do, Hashem will take of the rest! Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel is the embodiment of that message. By nature's laws there is no way he can do what he does, traveling the world to raise money for a seven-thousand-person *yeshiva*, and keeping up the hours of Torah learning that he does! He does not have the strength! It can only be because he wants it! Do you see what you are capable of when you want something!" 🤖

## THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

### SHABBTAI TZVI (PART II)

Recap: After failure and frustration in Turkey and Greece, and a short stop in Alexandria, Egypt, Shabbtai Tzvi and his new bride, Sarah, arrived on the shores of the Holy Land and quietly settled in Jerusalem.

Avraham Nosson ben Elisha Chaim Ashkenazi, commonly known as Nathan of Gaza, was born in approximately 1643 in Jerusalem to eastern European parents who had settled in the Sephardic community of Jerusalem. Nathan was nothing short of a genius and possessed many great intellectual qualities. Aside from being a diligent and high-achieving student, Nathan was a prolific writer and an extremely motivated individual. Moreover, Nathan was an accomplished Torah scholar and, unlike Shabbtai Tzvi, he meticulously fulfilled every law of the Torah, never acting in a strange or abnormal manner. By the age of twenty, Nathan – one of the outstanding students of Rabbi Yaakov Chagiz of Jerusalem – had committed half of *Shas* to memory. Shortly after his marriage to the daughter of an affluent Jew from Damascus named Shmuel Lisbon, Nathan settled in Gaza where he began to study *kabbala*. One of Nathan's prized discoveries was that the Jewish nation lacked proficiency in *kabbala*, which resulted in deficient faith in the ultimate redemption. Nathan sought to rectify this and began to spread the teachings of *kabbala* throughout the Jewish nation, a job which he firmly believed would be the impetus for the final redemption. Nathan's reputation as a devout *kabbalist* grew and his name soon reached the ears of Shabbtai Tzvi, who eagerly travelled to Gaza to meet the celebrated *kabbalist*. When Shabbtai Tzvi entered Nathan's office, Nathan collapsed onto the floor in a mystical trance. When he finally composed himself, Nathan revealed to Shabbtai Tzvi that he possessed a precious and holy soul and was destined to be the Messiah of the Jewish people.

Initially, Shabbtai Tzvi was reluctant to accept Nathan's prophetic vision, but after much persuasion, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, 1665, Shabbtai Tzvi announced publicly that he was the redeemer of the Jewish nation. Thus, the union was created. Nathan would serve as the prophet of the Messiah – Shabbtai Tzvi. The 17<sup>th</sup> of Sivan marked the beginning of the Messianic movement of Shabbtai Tzvi which would shake the very core of world Jewry. 🤖