

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Playing Our Part

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Moshe and Aharon, who were the primary advocates for *Klal Yisrael*, constantly petitioning Pharaoh for the nation's freedom, are mentioned as a pair many times throughout the Torah. Sometimes Moshe is mentioned before Aharon, and sometimes Aharon's name appears before Moshe's. Rashi explains that this variation is intentional, and it teaches us that Moshe and Aharon were of equal stature; neither was superior to the other.

The difficulty with this explanation is that Moshe does in fact appear to be of greater stature than Aharon. There is no question Aharon was a spiritual giant; as a prophet and the beloved High Priest of the Jewish people, who exuded *ahavas Yisrael* and love of peace amongst man, he certainly was a most lofty individual. Moshe, however, was the greatest prophet of all time, conversing regularly with G-d. He was an unapologetic servant of Hashem, the indefatigable leader of the Jewish people, and was the one through whom Hashem gave us the Torah. Still, despite all his accomplishments, Moshe was the humblest of all men. It is not a slight to Aharon's achievements to say he was not on the level of Moshe. Why then, does the Torah hint to us that they were in fact equal?

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that the Torah is teaching us a fundamental lesson: greatness is not measured by

accomplishment, but by the amount of potential realized. Moshe and Aharon each had certain potential, and they each fulfilled it. That Moshe ultimately seems to have achieved more than Aharon is not of consequence, as Aharon too fulfilled his service of G-d to the utmost. Their greatness was in using their potential to the fullest; thus, Moshe and Aharon were of equal stature.

This concept has major implications for all of us. It is easy to become discouraged in our spiritual development when we perceive so many others with seemingly superior capabilities. Be it in knowledge or deed, the advanced accomplishments of our peers can diminish our motivation for spiritual growth. But Hashem gave us each a particular set of circumstances, with specific abilities and tendencies, because we each have our own mission. When we realize that the true measure of success is how we utilize those circumstances, we are empowered to strive for greatness through our unique *avodas Hashem*. To paraphrase Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier, it's not about the part we play, but how well we play that part. 🙏



THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
 RABBI DOVID SPETNER

This week's *parasha*:

Q) What exactly does it mean that specific names of Hashem were not made known to the *Avos*? Was something missing of their knowledge of Hashem?

A) According to one explanation in Rashi, the idea that a particular name of Hashem was unknown to the *Avos* refers to that name of Hashem that represents Hashem as the fulfiller of His promises. Since the *Avos* never saw the fulfillment of the promise to give the land of Canaan to their children, that aspect of fully knowing Hashem through that name was missing.

Last week's *parasha*:

Q) We see Tzipora, the wife of Moshe, performing *mila* (circumcision) on their son. Is a woman allowed to perform *mila*?

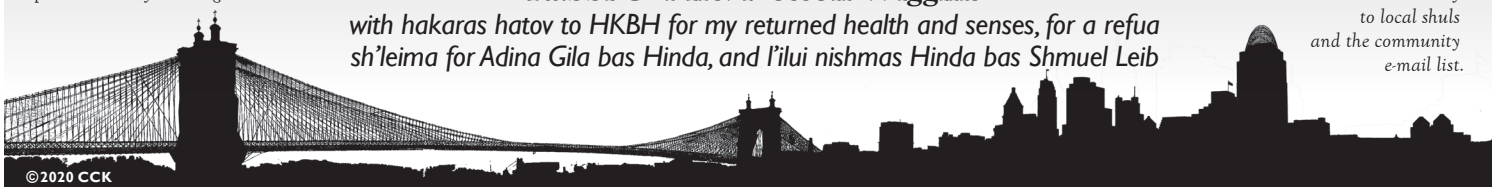
A) This is actually a dispute in the Talmud, *Avoda Zara* 27a, between Rav and Rebbi Yochanon and subsequently in the *Shulchan Aruch*. The opinion that says that a woman

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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may not perform *mila* understands that Tzipora did not perform the *mila* itself but arranged for someone else to do it or she began it and Moshe completed it. 🤖

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. 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 SHINING EXAMPLE

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, a leader of European Jewry, was once on a vacation at a resort town in northern Poland to help restore his health after a difficult bout of illness. As part of his health regimen, he was supposed to take walks every day. On one of these walks, while being accompanied by those that had come to seek his advice on important matters, a man came up to him and his entourage and with a heavy stutter asked for directions to the local doctor. One of the men who was familiar with the area began to give the man directions. As he was talking, Rabbi Grodzinsky softly held the arm of his companion, and asked, "Would you please show him all the way to the doctor?" His companion agreed and they set off to find the doctor's office. Rabbi Grodzinsky then continued his walk. Before continuing the conversation though, he looked at those around him and said, "The man very likely would want to ask again to confirm that he was in the right place but would possibly be too embarrassed to because of his speech impediment

A BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

In the beginning of the *parasha*, the Torah relates that G-d used four different expressions of redemption in what He commanded Moshe to tell the Jewish people. They are: *v'hotzasi*, *v'hitzalti*, *v'ga'alti*, and *v'lakachti*. Translated as: I will take out, I will save, I will redeem, I will take. It is in connection to these four expressions that the sages instituted that we drink four cups of wine at the Pesach Seder. *Ba'al Haturim* brings that this Rabbinic *mitzvah* is hinted to in the words themselves. The numerical value of these four expressions is the same as the sentence: *ze ani b'Yisrael lo yifchasu lo mei'arba kosos shel yayin*. Which means, even the poorest of Jews should be supplied with at least four cups of wine. 🤖

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*.

and it might take a long time until he figures out where the doctor is. Therefore, I told our companion to show him all the way." 🤖

THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

SHABBTAI TZVI (PART IV)

Recap: With the partnership between Shabbtai Tzvi and Nathan solidified, the stage is set for the duo to begin persuading world Jewry of the impending redemption.

The team's first step in the Messianic process was to abolish the fast of the 17th of Tamuz. Shabbtai Tzvi declared it a day of festivity and joy and instructed that *Hallel* be recited. The residents of Gaza enthusiastically accepted Shabbtai Tzvi's proclamation and celebrated the day with merry singing and dancing. The residents of Hebron followed suit. However, the rabbinate of Jerusalem wasn't as naïve, ever since Shabbtai Tzvi had roasted pork and recited the blessing of "*matir issurim*" at a rabbinic party which he hosted. The rabbis of Jerusalem convened and unanimously voted to excommunicate Shabbtai Tzvi. One of the leading rabbis who signed the ban was Shabbtai Tzvi's own teacher – Rabbi Yaakov Chagiz. A copy of that ban was rushed to Constantinople in an attempt to stop the fraudulent pair in their tracks. The rabbis also convinced the Turkish government that Shabbtai Tzvi was plotting a national rebellion, and Shabbtai Tzvi became a wanted felon. And so, the fugitive and his partner fled the country in search of a safe and welcoming community.

Upon leaving Jerusalem, Shabbtai Tzvi and Nathan agreed to divide and conquer. Shabbtai Tzvi would travel to as many communities as possible to introduce himself as the Messiah while Nathan would return to Gaza where he would dispatch letters encouraging the nation to repent in anticipation of the arrival of Mashiach. Shabbtai Tzvi's first stop was Aleppo, Syria, where, due to Nathan's letter of recommendation, he was warmly received and showered with praise and respect. The rabbis of Aleppo sent letters to Egypt and Constantinople encouraging them to repent and prepare for the arrival of Mashiach. As mentioned, the rabbis of Jerusalem had already dispatched a letter warning the rabbis of Constantinople of the danger that Shabbtai Tzvi posed. But when they received the euphoric message from the rabbinate of Aleppo singing the praises of the holy Messiah Shabbtai Tzvi, the rabbis of Constantinople disregarded the warning from Jerusalem as an act of zealotry. Hence, the communities of the exile were quickly ignited by the flames of Shabbtai Tzvi's Messianic drive which was being fueled by the ever-so tactful Nathan of Gaza and his persuasive literary skills. As the movement gained force, Shabbtai Tzvi decisively planned to return to his hometown, Izmir, to fulfill his Messianic mission. 🤖