

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

What Are You Looking At




RABBI
MOSHETZVI
CRYSTAL

One man's junk is another man's treasure. In other words, it's all about perspective. Perspective is a powerful thing. We find an example of this in this week's *parasha*. The first encampment after the splitting of the sea about which the Torah does not describe its physical accoutrements (or lack thereof) is Mount Sinai. Our Sages also remark that we can learn from the *passukim* that this was the first encampment that there were no disagreements between people as they set up camp. Coincidence? Likely not. What then, made the difference? Why is this place different than all other places? It's all about perspective.

Rabbi Shmshon Refael Hirsch explains that it was no secret to the Jewish people why they were being taken out of Egypt. They knew Hashem had a plan for them. They knew that Hashem did not release them from bondage simply because of their illustrious ancestors. They were going to be a holy nation, and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai would be the point where they would be charged with that mission. Up until they reached Mount Sinai, though, whenever they came to a new place, the first thought was, "Is this a place good to stop? Does it have what we need?" Hence, they focused a critical eye on the physical characteristics of that place. This emphasis on making sure that their needs were met wherever they were sometimes led to clashing with others, as well. If you are getting in the way

of my comfort, we will likely not get along. Mount Sinai was different. The Jewish people had something entirely different on their minds when they reached Mount Sinai. It was excitement for the moment that would soon be upon them, that everlasting bond with King of all kings, our Father in Heaven. When that is on your mind, the physical surroundings do not matter so much. There are bigger things to think about.

In a related idea, I heard from Rabbi Frand that if you want to work on not transgressing *Lashon Horah*, denigrating others, the place to start is not with watching what comes out of your mouth. That won't get you very far. Rather, the practical place to begin is with how you view others. The more quickly one formulates a negative opinion of others, the harder it will be not to share that opinion with others. If you think positively, though, you won't have anything negative to share. It's all about perspective. 



THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI YITZCHOK PREIS

This week's *parasha*:

Q) Moshe's second son is described as being named "Eliezer" due to the fact that "Hashem was Ezri" (my Savior) in providing rescue from Pharaoh's sword. Why did Moshe wait until the birth of his second son to draw attention to that escape? Moshe's first son is named Gershom, reflective of Moshe's residing – *ger* – in Midian, a reality that came to be *following* the escape!?

A) One approach, based on *Chizkuni* in *Shemos*: Although Moshe was quite distant from Pharaoh and his sword, Moshe could not know that the death threat was irrelevant until Hashem told him that there was no longer a concern. That only happened as Moshe was about to leave Midian, in close proximity to the timing of the birth of his second son.

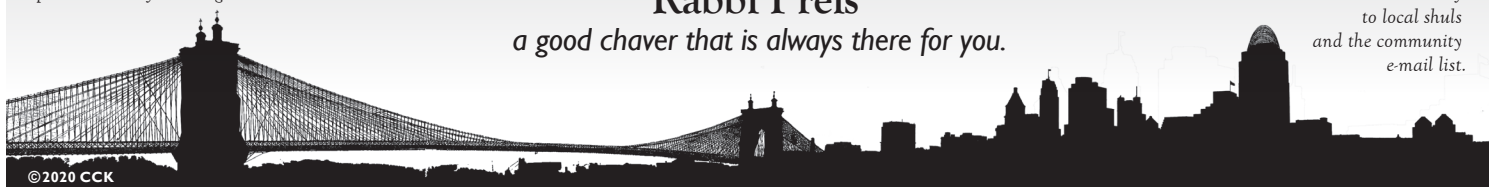
A second approach: The *Shaarei Aharon* quotes from *Imrei Noam* quoting "Chossid Echod," who posits that both sons were named for miracles, and that when one has experienced two miracles, it is appropriate to highlight the most recent miracle first. "Residing in a foreign land" – the basis for the name Gershom – is actually reflective of the miracle of achieving success while in foreign territory and Moshe addressed that more recent miracle before reflecting on the earlier miracle of his escape

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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from Pharaoh. This seems to be akin to the Ramban's explanation for our shift to Persian names for the months of our calendar. These remind us of Hashem saving us from the Babylonian/Persian exiles, more recent than our salvation from Egypt. Last week's:

Q) *Shiras HaYam* as sung by Moshe and the men is quite long. And the *Shira* sung by Miriam and the women, is not even one full *passuk*! Why the imbalance?

A) Many commentators understand that the women's song was in fact no shorter than that of the men. The few words described might be more of a chorus than the body of their song. But, if taking the approach that in fact this song was much shorter, some suggest that we consider the following:

Emotion can generate song, and song can generate emotion.

The women left Mitzrayim with instruments in hand, awaiting the opportunity to express their gratitude to Hashem. They did not need an elaborate song to generate

A SHINING EXAMPLE

The family of Rabbi Gedalia Dessler employed a teenage boy from a poor home to clean their house. After some time, an expensive silver *Kiddush* cup disappeared. Upon being questioned about it, the poor youth admitted that he had taken the cup to pawn for a loan and insisted he would return it when he paid back the loan. Rabbi Dessler decided that he could not continue to have the boy work in his home, but he did not share what he learned with anyone, not even his family, and he told the boy that he would continue to pay him his salary until he found another

emotion. They needed only a simple phrase to express the emotion that was bursting forth. On the other hand, the men weren't quite there yet. Moshe inspired them – through song – and awakened their emotions. They were then able to continue the song and utilize the song-induced emotions to properly praise Hashem. 🤖

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 BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

The eighth of the Ten Commandments is *lo tignov*, do not steal. Our sages say that this is actually referring to kidnapping as opposed to the stealing of an object. They learn this from comparing this commandment to those around it. Since the commandments next to it would be punishable by death, the commandment not to steal must also be the sort of stealing that would be punishable by death, which therefore could only be kidnapping. *Ba'al Haturim* points out that this is hinted to in the words *lo tignov* themselves. *Lo tignov* has the same numerical value as the words *goneiv nefesh*, kidnapping a person. 🤖

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*.

job. The boy did not forget the kindness he was shown. Years later this boy grew up to be an important official in the new Communist Russian government, and when Rabbi Dessler was charged with “non-compliance” with the new government it was this former employee who not only pulled strings to get Rabbi Dessler out of jail, but arranged for him and his family to emigrate as well! 🤖

THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

SHABBTAI TZVI (PART VI)

Recap: Shabbtai Tzvi emerged from his four-month seclusion period and caused quite a ruckus in the Portuguese synagogue in Izmir, hurling insults at his opponents, including the respected rabbi of Izmir, Rabbi Benveniste.

A few days after the fateful episode in the Portuguese synagogue, Rabbi Benveniste, for reasons which remain almost entirely incomprehensible, openly declared himself a fervent supporter of Shabbtai Tzvi and his Messianic movement. As a result, a number of leading rabbis in Izmir subsequently switched sides as well and began actively advocating and patronizing Shabbtai Tzvi. As the news of Izmir's rabbinic support for Shabbtai Tzvi spread like wildfire, the city's Jews erupted in Messianic euphoria. Within just a few short days, Izmir, which had been a heated battleground, became a city of Shabbtai Tzvi loyalists. Public celebrations were held in the streets as everyone anticipated the next phase of the impending redemption.

Shabbtai Tzvi's next step was to travel to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, to inform the sultan of his Messianic mission and request his support and cooperation. The rumor of Shabbtai Tzvi's Messianic identity traveled ahead of him and the Jews of Constantinople began to debate and take sides. The government officials got wind of the situation, and a meeting was held between the Jewish representatives and the government officials. The consensus was to arrest Shabbtai Tzvi on account of endangering the economic and political stability of the empire. Upon entry to Constantinople, in February 1666, Shabbtai Tzvi was arrested by the local police and brought into custody. The grand vizier, Kopruluzade Fazil Ahmed Pasha, took personal charge of Shabbtai Tzvi's case. However, due to constant bribery from dedicated supporters, Shabbtai Tzvi was treated well in prison and was permitted to receive visitors in his spacious room. Streams of guests would arrive each day to get a glimpse of their holy Messiah, and amongst the throngs of guests was an esteemed delegation which had travelled a great distance from far-away Poland. 🤖