

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Hit Where It Hurts

As we approach the three weeks, a certain uncomfortable feeling begins to settle in. Will we be able to relate to the *churban* (destruction) of the Temple this year, or will we experience that odd discomfort that seems to grab hold of our senses when we attempt to find a meaningful connection?

I'd like to share a thought that relates to a general idea I find uniquely inspiring. Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz shares a powerful insight in this week's Torah portion. Rashi comments on the words "And Miriam died there" that the Torah placed this story specifically juxtaposed to the segment detailing the laws of the red heifer to teach that just as offerings atone for us, so too does the death of the righteous. R' Yerucham points out that this comment is not explaining anything from the perspective of reason, but rather from the perspective of factual knowledge. That is, just as we know, factually, that offerings atone for our sins, so too the death of the righteous. However, in reason it is the opposite. The fact that the death of the righteous atone for our sins is indeed understandable. Atonement means to appease the aspect of "justice" in the heavenly system of universal function. The death of someone righteous is a travesty and a terrible blow to our people. Hence, it is a fulfilment of

justice being enacted and the attribute of "justice" is appeased. This very process is meant to occur also when we bring an offering to G-d. The reasoning of why it should, though, is not completely clear.

To my eyes, this idea can hold the key to moving past our aforementioned question. This concept can penetrate our wall of apathy. Just imagine, when the Temple existed we experienced such exalted levels of atonement with just the offering of an animal. That is something we don't have and are not connected to anymore, which hurts. It really hurts. Let's focus on repentance this year and see if we can move forward in the direction of the rebuilding of our Holy Temple and the reinstatement of our sacrifices. 🙏



RABBI
EZRA
STETTIN



**Kollel will be off from
June 17th until June 29th**

**THE RABBI WAS ASKED
ON THE PARASHA**

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI YITZCHOK PREIS

This week's *parasha*:

Question: Why was Miriam buried where she passed away rather than carried into the Land of Israel (as was done to Yosef and his brothers)? I understand that Moshe and Aharon are getting some type of punishment that demands that they can't be brought into the Land, but I don't see any indication that Miriam was being punished.

Answer: The *Shaarei Ahron* (based in part on the *Meshech Chochmah*) points to the fact that Miriam's death, and burial, take place at the border of Edom. This territory is described as being among the areas that will be included in the "Greater" Israel of Messianic times. And the expanded territory would include cities of refuge which serve as cities for the tribe of Levi, Miriam's birth tribe. As such, there was no need to cause her the distress of delayed burial. In contrast, Yosef and his brothers were being brought to the areas that would be assigned to each of their tribes, and their burials were delayed until those territories were conquered.

Last week's *parasha*:

Q) Moshe responded to Korach's challenge with "in the morning, it will be clarified... ." Why wait until morning?

A) Rashi describes this as a stall tactic, with the hopes that, with time, there

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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would be a change of heart. There could also be a message in the very focus on “morning.”

I once saw a fascinating suggestion, I believe based on the *Nesivos Sholom*. Korach viewed himself as having innate greatness, but failed to recognize how much his own greatness was dependent on the teachings of Moshe. He was something like the moon mistakenly attributing its radiance to itself, forgetting its dependency on the sun. That mistake evaporates when the sun shines forth and the moon becomes insignificant or even invisible. Moshe was hoping that by mentioning the clarity associated with daylight, Korach, or at least his followers, would take the hint and acknowledge that they had much to gain from the leadership of Moshe and Aharon. 🕊️

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@cincynkollel.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

Ms. Chevy Garfinkel was scheduled to speak in Cincinnati but in the meantime she and her siblings were dealing with their sick father. This precluded her properly preparing for the three times she was supposed to be speaking over Shabbos. Her last hope was to use Friday, after a good night sleep, as her day of preparation. This chance also seemed to be slipping away as her Thursday night flight was delayed twice, with her actually landing sometime after one in the morning. This got delayed even further as, when she was finally brought to her host's home, the door was locked and the house dark and quiet. Not sure what she was going to do then, she asked the young lady, Penina, who had picked her up from the airport if her parents possibly had any place for her to crash for the night. “I'm a boarder here, but my room has room for you,” Penina graciously replied. As they got back in the car Ms. Garfinkel mentioned how she was hoping to wake up with a clear head on Friday and prepare for her Shabbos lectures, but it looked like now that was not going to happen. “I know what you can say over Shabbos Ms. Garfinkel,” replied Penina. “What do you mean?” “Two years ago, you spent a Shabbos with my high school and you spoke three

A BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

Our *parasha* tells that when the Jewish people circumvented the land of Edom, where descendants of Eisav lived, the people became exasperated along the way, “*Vatiktzar nefesh ha'am baderech.*” The reason for this specifically happening now, after forty years in the desert, the Ba'al Haturim explains, is because the Jewish people were given a prophetic vision as they passed by the Edomites of the troubles that would befall the Jewish people during the future exile of Edom as well as its seemingly interminable length. 🕊️

times over Shabbos. My friends and I asked you after Shabbos for your notes so that we could remember what you said because we liked it so much. You were hesitant at first because you said your notes are unintelligible to anyone but yourself, and then you agreed to write your notes over in a more organized fashion. I took your notes and, using them as a guide, wrote up your lectures. I even traveled with them to seminary and I have them now.” Sure enough Ms. Garfinkel saw the beautifully written lectures she had given, revealing that when she thought she was doing some high school girls a favor she had in truth really been doing one for herself. 🕊️

THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

FALSE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST RAMCHAL (PART IV)

Rabbi Bassan began a lengthy correspondence with his student during which he questioned several of Ramchal's behaviors. In addition, Rabbi Moshe Chagiz of Altona, the rabbis of Venice, and others voiced their concerns in letters written to Ramchal. It is well beyond the scope of this column to summarize the totality of the exchange between Ramchal and his opponents, but what can be said from a general standpoint is that there were essentially two different accusations: 1. Ramchal was an adherent of Shabbtai Tzvi and his heretical beliefs and, 2. Ramchal's *kabbalah* was of a demonic nature and therefore not genuine. In addition, Ramchal was attacked for not being married and for not growing a beard. Another cause of suspicion was the fact that Ramchal was experiencing revelations outside of Eretz Yisrael, something which his opponents believed was an impossibility.

To clear his name from the abovementioned allegations and to avoid further controversy, Rabbi Bassan advised Ramchal to take a public oath promising not to engage in the compilation of *kabbalistic* works in the style of the *Zohar* or based on the teachings of a *maggid*. In addition, Ramchal was to turn over all the manuscripts of this nature, which Rabbi Bassan would watch over. Ramchal humbly accepted the advice of his teacher, and the oath was administered in Padua on the 3rd of Av, 1730 in the presence of the rabbis and lay leaders of Padua and Venice. Ramchal sent his manuscripts to Rabbi Bassan, who stored them in a locked chest in his home in Reggio. As Ramchal expresses in his letters to his opponents, avoiding *machlokes* (argument), which is despised in the eyes of G-d, dominated his personal interest in the study of *kabbalah* and this is why he followed the voice of his master (Rabbi Bassan) and decided to refrain from fulfilling his life's ambitions. This act of submission displays Ramchal's tremendous sense of humility as well as his concern for the desecration of G-d's name.

For nearly five years (1730-1735) following the oath which Ramchal took in Padua, his opponents remained silent. Ramchal faithfully kept his promise and wrote only on topics which were permissible according to his oath. During these years of relative peacefulness, Ramchal published a number of works, most famously, his *Daas Tevunos*. In Av, 1731, Ramchal married Tziporah the daughter of the chief rabbi of Mantua, Rabbi David Panacci. 🕊️