

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

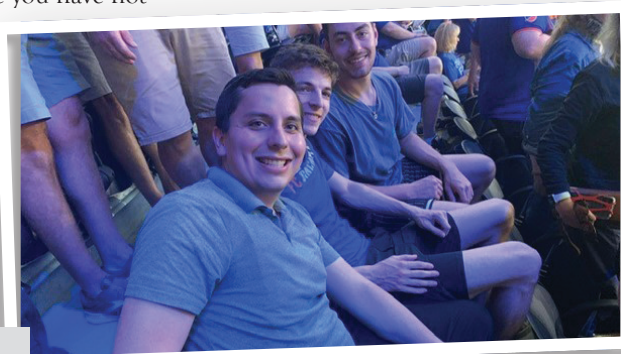
An Ear for It

When one begins to delve into the world of the Talmud, one cannot get very far without having to take as a given the following notion: Anything written in the written Torah has absolutely no superfluity to it whatsoever. All the way down to what letters are left in or out of a word make worlds of difference. This is something that is quite intuitive. If the Torah is G-d's book, it would only make sense that everything contained within would absolutely be necessary. However, I found that this is really something written in the Torah itself in our *parasha*. After the Song of *Ha'azinu*, Moshe tells us "Pay attention to all what I have testified to you and commanded to you... for it is not an empty thing for you." Rashi explains this to mean that the Torah is not empty for you, as following it carries with it great reward. Rav Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin in his work *Ha'amek Davar* brings a different way to understand the words based on words of the Talmud *Yerushalmi*, "It [The Torah] is not an empty thing, and if you find it [the Torah] empty, it is from you! And why? Because you have not yet put sufficient effort into its study." Meaning, says Rav Berlin, one could ask, why would you think the Torah is empty? It is full of commandments of G-d! The *Yerushalmi* therefore is pointing out that those words of the Torah, "It

is not an empty thing," are not referring to just the material stated in the Torah, but even how it is written. There is much to infer if one pays attention to all parts of the wording of the Torah, but just like there is something known colloquially as "an ear for music" we have to have an ear for Torah to pick up what is being said. That ear for Torah is developed only by the study of Torah itself. The more learning of Torah and listening for its subtleties we do, the more we develop our ability to delve even further. The Torah is speaking to us; we are charged with listening. 🎧



RABBI
MOSHE TZVI
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**Kollel will be off
until October 5th**

THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI YITZCHOK PREIS

This week's *parasha*:

Q) Yehoshua is referred to (in 32:44) as "Hosheiah." I realize that this was his original name prior to Moshe adding the *yud*, but why shift back to that name at this point?

A) The *Sifri* explains this to be a function of Yehoshua's righteousness. Rather than highlight the heightened stature connoted by Moshe's favoring him and embellishing his name, he approached the populace as his "original self," pure and untainted by elevated rank.

The *Ibn Ezra* suggests an alternate possibility. He theorizes that the name change was actually not well known. To the masses, to whom Yehoshua is now being presented in a leadership role, he was still known by the original "Hosheiah."

The *Kli Yakar* takes a different approach. He reminds us that the modification made by Moshe was actually a form of a prayer; G-d (*yud* and *hei*) should save (*hoshia*) you from the plot of the spies. As long as any of those who had been influenced by the spies were still alive, Moshe maintained this prayerful tone. Now that this was no longer the case, Moshe felt comfortable reverting to Hosheiah's original name. 🎧

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@cincynollel.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.

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A SHINING EXAMPLE

It was going to be his first experience keeping an entire Shabbos. Julian was very excited. He had been invited to a Shabbos at a hotel where there would be a Shabbaton for people who were newer to observant Judaism. They could mingle with those already observant or forever observant to get a real taste of what Shabbos could look like. And then he walked into the hotel. It was full of people. It was full of people that, though he was expecting them to be there, now that he was here among them, he was feeling self-consciousness. And plus, where was all the sushi that he was promised? When he saw the rabbi who had invited him, Julian told him he was going home. "Don't go yet," Rabbi Rosenfeld pleaded, "give it a chance." Julian

agreed to stay, but Rabbi Rosenfeld thought to himself that Julian actually keeping a Shabbos when he was already uncomfortable did not seem to be a likely conclusion to the day. Then something inexplicable happened. Julian's cell phone lost service. Everyone with the same carrier as he had lost service while other carriers did not. Reluctantly, Julian put away his phone for Shabbos. Rabbi Rosenfeld took Julian to the *davening*, meals, and programming, and Julian began to warm up to the Shabbos idea. Every time he asked a hotel staff member if his carrier had returned service to the area, he was told they didn't. Not until Julian asked after *Havdalah*, was he finally told that the carrier had service. In the meantime, Julian had kept his first Shabbos, and he enjoyed it too. 🕯️

A BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

At the beginning of the *parasha*, Moshe asks that his words "*Ya'arof Kahmatar*," should drip like dew, meaning they should be sweet to his listeners. Ba'al Haturim points out that the word "*Ya'arof*" is also used to mean destruction like in Hoshea, "*Ya'arof mizbechosam*," that their altars will be destroyed, deriving from the word "*Arifa*." The double-edged meaning, says Ba'al Haturim, hints to the idea that if one learns Torah as Moshe intended then it will be sweet for you. On the other hand, if the Torah is learned for the wrong reasons, it will lead to destruction. 🕯️



THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

THE FRANKISTS (PART VIII)

Prior to the end of the debate, on September 17, 1759 (the 25th day of Elul), Jacob Frank and Yehuda Leyb Krysa were baptized in the Lwow cathedral. A calculation of the total number of Jews who converted with Frank is difficult to ascertain. However, based on the accounts of eyewitnesses in Lwow at that time, at least 1,000 Jews converted in 1759, around the time of Frank's conversion. The Frankists' conversions continued until 1763, and it is estimated that at least 3,000 Jews converted between 1759 and 1763. Aside from the mass conversion of perhaps 100,000 Jews following a horrific pogrom in Spain in 1391 headed by the notorious Ferrand Martinez, the Frankist conversion is considered one of the worst in all of Jewish history.

On October 23, 1759, Frank and six of his most dedicated followers moved to Warsaw where they became celebrated heroes of the Catholic community. But Frank wasn't yet satisfied; he wished to establish a community for Sabbatian-Christians near the Turkish border. Frank's goal was to create a semi-independent community where he could gather more believers. Frank's idea was met with opposition and concern so he began a series of negotiations with Church leaders in Warsaw. However, all negotiations came to a standstill when, in mid-November, several locals reported that Frank's conversion was insincere. Strange behavior by Frank himself also concerned the Christian authorities. Another issue was Frank's earlier conversion to Islam, which had been known to some even before Frank converted to Christianity, but was ignored.

On January 7, 1760, Frank was arrested in Warsaw. After a series of court hearings and following Frank's vow of allegiance to Catholicism, Frank was sent to Czeszochowa (a town in Southern Poland near Krakow), where he was imprisoned in a fortress until a verdict could be reached. Meanwhile, Frank lost his entire following and was left alone in prison for a number of years. Eventually, when the Russians defeated the Poles, Frank was set free. In March of 1773, Jacob Frank set out for the Moravian town of Brunn (now called Brno, Czechia) where he settled with an acquaintance of his, a converted family by the name of Dobruschka. Frank's Sabbatian-Christian activities in Moravia were met with little success. He died in Offenbach, Germany on December 10, 1791.

This marks the end of our column about false messiahs. After Succos, the Jewish History column will explore another intriguing topic. Stay tuned! 🕯️