

## Parshas Yisro

This week's Parsha has the ten commandments, the giving of the Torah, and the culminating event since creation. The world will never be the same after the Torah is revealed and manifested in physical form so that the Jews can serve Hashem in a way that draws out and from spirituality, from where everything is sourced.

In 18:2 we are told that Yisro returned Moshe's wife and two sons, whom Moshe left in his custody. After marrying Tzipora, and having his two sons, Rashi explains, Moshe went back to Egypt, where he met Ahron his brother. Ahron asked, "Who are these people", for which Moshe responded, that this is his wife and sons. Ahron, responded "we are already grieving the ones down in Egypt, why are you bringing more down to add to them? Moshe then sent Tzipora and his sons back to Yisro.

Malbim explains that Moshe was divorced from Tziporah. There are reasons posited by multiple Mefharshim, Moshe was separated from his wife for 40 years, so as not to engage in relations, which would have impinged on his ability to receive prophecy (Shabbos 87a), which Moshe was on constant standby to receive. Miriam, Moshe's sister, wanted Moshe to divorce (or misunderstood his separation based on his leadership, and change in the legal hierarchy established by Yisro- Ran and others). The Rebbe in Lekutei Sichos 18 pg. 145 in a note explains that Rashi held the opinion that Tziporah is called Isha, not Ishto, which shows their status as separated. There exists the obvious reason, which was due to his prophesying

responsibilities, negating his ability to be a husband (it would seem).

Moshe wife is subsequently returned to him, for which he seems to be happy (he bows to Yisro according to Rashi, and even though Yisro summoned Moshe through a messenger, Yisro believed using Tzipora and the sons would be a way to get Moshe to come. Moshe, in all his splendor came to Yisro, for which he has bestowed a great honor.)

Within those few pesukim, Yisro praises Hashem and offers a sacrifice, and the elders and Ahron join in eating.

Why Moshe got divorced seems to be a key issue to answer. Without Rashi the following wouldn't be clear to us. In Bereishis (12:10-20), when Avraham tells his wife Sara to hide in a box so that Sarah wouldn't be claimed as a wife for Pharoah, which Rashi explains this in the pesukim. As well, as soon as Pharoah realized what he had done, he hastily sent Avraham away. They were lewd, as Rashi explains, and would claim Sarah as theirs. Just as Avraham "hid his wife" and presented her as not married, that is, as his sister, was for a specific reason. I explained in Lech Licha, that Avraham's approach to acting as a leader and being our forefather, was both miraculous but had natural order to it. For example, then, when Avraham went to Egypt with Sarah, he didn't rely upon a miracle to stave off death from Pharoah, on the contrary, he hid Sarah, and called her his sister (first to hide her then he lied about her- he could have just started with the lie, but she was discovered, according to Rashi, when the border agents inspected and found her in the box). Whereas his influence, and power to defeat the warring

4/5 kings, among other scenarios, were miraculous.

According to midrash from Lech Licha, Pharaoh bore a grudge against Avraham for the “trickery and deception”. And Avraham was told, and arguably the Pharaohs knew that there was going to be a time, when Avraham’s offspring will be in Egypt, from where they will be redeemed. Hence, Pharaohs “hardening of the heart” and chasing after the Jews even once they were released, is connected to the history of the relationship between Pharaoh and Avraham. Meaning it seems there is a deception Pharaoh is trying to achieve by not letting the Jews out.

There’s a midrash in Tehillim 7:18 and in other places that Tziporah was qualitatively very beautiful, which is a direct parallel to how Mefharshim describes Sarah, that because of her beauty, it would cause Avraham added risk. Therefore, one can posit based on this, that Moshe was trying to repel any added Pharaoh deception and risk. Which was to put Moshe’s wife at risk (in addition to the reason Ahron gave- stated above).

According to the above reasoning, we can add a dimension to why the posuk keeps referring to Yisro as “the father-in-law of Moshe.” I explained previously on this Parsha, drawing from Rashi and other Mefharshim, Yisro is first called “Kohen Midian” then, many times later, he is called Father-in-law of Moshe; this is to show the

transition he made from his priesthood in Midian to being a proud supporter of Hashem, to his son in law and the Jewish People. It also reflects the possibility that even though he was in a high-ranking place, he acknowledged Hashem and Hashem’s greatness. But more than this, based on the above, his daughter and grandchildren were in his custody- I would say his prominence was that he acted as Moshe’s father-in-law and kept his grandchildren in the ways of his son-in-law and not his religious practices.

My final analysis for the week is based on Ibn Ezra’s explanation for why Moshe needed to grow up in Pharaoh’s house<sup>1</sup>. Moshe Rabbeinu could be construed as an outsider of the daily suffering of the Jews. This power was, in my opinion, what gave Moshe the ability to be a clear, ego-less leader of the Jews. What I mean by this is, while Moshe had encountered his own trials, such as banishment from his family, to almost<sup>2</sup> getting killed by Pharaoh for killing the Egyptian soldier who was punishing Dasam and Aviram, to leaving his wife and children in an unknown place while he returned on a completely subservient mission of Hashem to save the Jews. The redemption of the Jews is not tied to any reason other than to serve Hashem and be redeemed to receive the Torah. If there was a person from the trenches that would be the redeemer, perhaps their own vision of morality and retribution would be part of the negotiations to get the Jews out. Moshe, having been brought up in the Kings

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<sup>1</sup> 1) he learned leadership skills by being in the house of Pharaoh 2) the jews took him seriously because he was from a leadership position, as opposed to coming from the trenches of slavery, which fits with the Gemara explanation of Moshe needing

independent wealth, so no one will claim Moshe is on the payroll of anyone.

<sup>2</sup> On the words, “Vayatzilenu MeCherev Paroah”, Rashi explains a miracle occurred where Moshe’s neck hardened so as not to allow the sword to kill him.

house, and banished to outside land, wherefore he wasn't subject to the slavery, as indicated by Ahron, if he came to Egypt with his wife and children, then he would be adding to the number of enslaved and suffering. Moshe could have only been the redeemer, (aside for where his Neshama was sourced from), he would be able to act clearly and for the sole mission of what Hashem wanted, without strings attached, with no personal biases. The redemption had to succeed without a quid pro quo, and with no personal agendas, rather simply because Hashem willed for this outcome, but more importantly, to ensure the Torah was given with a nation concretized on a united front.

This mission is Moshe's to bear, and as the Chumash concludes, there was no other like him.

While there were a few disparate thoughts collected here, the theme remains the same, Hashem and the Torah are true, and everything that is recorded is specific and intentional and with purpose. As well the redeemer of us may arise from a place unknown to us, and it will happen K'heref Ayin.

Good Shabbos