

PARSHAS LECH LECHA

by Gedalia Litke

Rashi says in Parshas Ha'Azinu (32:48) that the expression 'b'etzem hayom hazeh' ('on this very day') is used three times in Chumash to indicate that the event in question was done in broad daylight, so to speak, and was unstoppable. The three events listed there by Rashi are the mabul/Flood, yetzias mitzrayim/Exodus and the petirah/death of Moshe Rabbeinu: People swore they would never allow Noach to enter the Ark, so HaShem had him enter in broad daylight to show it was unstoppable. The Egyptians swore they would never let the Jews leave, so the Exodus happened openly, showing it was unstoppable. And the Jews swore they would never let HaShem take Moshe away from them to die, so it occurred in broad daylight to show it was unstoppable.

The question on all of this is that in this week's Parsha there seems to be a fourth example, identical in every way to the first three, yet ignored by Rashi in Ha'Azinu. Furthermore, it is Rashi himself who points it out - (17:23) at the bris milah of Avrohom Avinu the expression 'b'etzem hayom hazeh' is used and Rashi says it was done in broad daylight to show that none of the cynics who wished to prevent his bris milah would be able to do so. Why doesn't bris milah make Rashi's list in Ha'Azinu?

Perhaps the answer is that in the first three instances it was HaShem Himself who caused the 'b'etzem hayom hazeh', whereas concerning Avrohom's bris milah it was Avrohom who steeled himself to overcome the cynics and did it 'in broad daylight'; Avrohom gets the credit for this achievement and therefore, although it is an example of 'in broad daylight', it does not belong on Rashi's original list which is focused exclusively on the occasions when it was HaShem who instigated the 'b'etzem hayom hazeh'.

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