

HER HUSBAND'S MODESTY

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Rabbi Frand on Parshas Beha'aloscha

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 376, Davening For A Choleh. Good Shabbos!

The Source of Tziporah's Error Was Her Husband's Modesty

The pasuk [verse] at the end of this week's parsha says that Miriam and Aharon spoke about their brother Moshe "concerning the Kushis woman that he married" [Bamidbar 12:1]. Rashi cites the Medrash, which elaborates on the background of this conversation. The narration of Miriam's conversation with Aharon is immediately preceded by the incident with Eldad and Meidad. Eldad and Meidad were suddenly given the gift of prophecy. Apparently, Moshe's wife was standing in the presence of Miriam. She made an off-hand comment, "Oh their poor wives - they effectively just lost their husbands!"

Tziporah bemoaned the fact that Mrs. Eldad and Mrs. Meidad were now going to become "prophet widows." "Their husbands will not have anything to do with them any longer. That is what happened to me. Moshe, my husband, became a prophet and he has nothing to do with me anymore."

Miriam was taken aback by this comment. "Wait a minute," she thought to herself. "I am a prophetess, my brother Aharon is a prophet. We do not have this restriction with our spouses." They began questioning Moshe's behavior with his wife.

G-d heard their comments. G-d testified regarding Moshe's uniqueness and to the fact that Moshe left his wife under Divine instruction. They were therefore wrong in criticizing Moshe.

This is the "story." But there is one pasuk in the narration that does not fit in. In the middle of the narration, the pasuk says, "And the man Moshe was the most modest man on the face of the earth"

[12:3]. What is this pasuk doing here? It is not germane to the subject matter! Perhaps a statement testifying to Moshe's status as the greatest of prophets would be relevant. However, his status as the most modest of people does not seem to fit in with the rest of the story.

The Avos D'Rav Nassan explains the pasuk in light of Miriam's dialogue with Aharon. Miriam had said "I am a prophetess and I did not need to leave my husband." Aharon had said "I am a prophet and I did not have to leave my wife." They concluded that the reason Moshe acted differently must be because he was haughty (a ba'al ga-avah). "It must be out of conceit and arrogance that Moshe concluded he is now above family life."

That is why G-d Himself came and testified that they were entirely wrong in their analysis of the situation. "This has nothing to do with Moshe Rabbeinu's arrogance. On the contrary - he is the most modest person who ever lived."

It was, in fact, Moshe Rabbeinu's modesty that caused Tzipporah to misinterpret his separation from her and caused her to conclude that the wives of Eldad and Meidad would suffer the same fate. Moshe was too humble to tell his wife that G-d told him he was special - the most special prophet who ever lived - and that's why he had to separate from his wife. Moshe just explained to his wife that they could not live together any longer because he was a prophet. She assumed that this was a rule that applied to all prophets. Moshe's modesty is very germane to the whole story, because that is what caused his wife to err in the first place when she assumed that Eldad and Meidad would now have to separate from their wives.

It is ironic that Moshe's attempt at concealing the unique nature of his prophecy brought about this whole sequence of events, and which required G-d to openly declare his special status.

The other lesson is one which we see very often in life. When people attack another individual about a perceived lack in a certain character trait, it usually turns out that the particular character trait is the person's most outstanding attribute.

Many times people attack someone for not being honest when in fact the person is incredibly honest. People attack someone and call him conceited when the opposite is true, he is extremely humble. Precisely the area where people attack others, quite often is the one area where those being attacked are beyond reproach.

The Special Sanctity of Yericho

The pasuk says, "And he said: Please do not leave us, for you know our encampments in the wilderness and you will be for us as eyes. And it will be if you go with us that the goodness that G-d will grant to us, we will share it with you." [Bamidbar 10:31-32]. The Imrei Shammai makes an interesting and timely comment regarding Moshe's plea with Yisro to not return back to Midian:

Rashi comments that the 'goodness' refers to the division of the Land of Israel. He mentions that there was a 500 square amah parcel of land that was the most fertile area of Yericho which was not

divided up in the original partitioning of the land into tribal portions. This was set aside as a portion to be given to that tribe in whose land the Bais HaMikdash [Temple] was going to be built. This would offset and compensate for the fact that the land used to build the Bais HaMikdash would in effect be taken away from that tribe. Rashi says that the descendants of Yisro were given the right to hold onto this land and settle there for the 400 plus years until the Bais HaMikdash was built in the time of King Shlomo. When the Bais HaMikdash was built, the Tribe of Benjamin in whose land the Bais HaMikdash was built received this fertile area of Yericho as compensation.

The Imrei Shammai cites a Talmudic passage [Tamid 30b] which says that it was possible to hear what was going on in the Bais HaMikdash from Yericho (despite the significant distance that would make such a phenomenon miraculous). The Ravad states that the sound waves only reached Yericho. In other directions, the sounds were not heard anywhere near that distance. The Ravad explains that since Yericho was the 'consolation' prize to the Tribe of Binyamin for their lost property in Jerusalem, it contains within itself some dimension of the sanctity of Jerusalem. Yericho was the first conquest of Eretz Yisroel in the time of Yehoshua. Just as the first fruits and Terumah [the first priestly gift] are holy, so too Yericho has a special sanctity. It is a pseudo Jerusalem. That is why it was possible to hear the sounds of the Bais HaMikdash in Yericho.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.
Technical Assistance by [Dovid Hoffman](#); Yerushalayim.

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

- Tape # 015 - Reinstating the Semicha
- Tape # 060 - Waiting Between Meat and Milk: Adults and Children
- Tape # 103 - The Seven Branched Menorah
- Tape # 149 - Bringing the Sefer Torah to a Temporary Minyan
- Tape # 196 - Vegetarianism
- Tape # 242 - Military Service and Potential Halachic Problems
- Tape # 286 - When Do We Stand In Honor of a Sefer Torah
- Tape # 332 - Tefilas Tashlumim: Making Up a Missed Davening
- Tape # 376 - Davening For A Choleh
- Tape # 420 - Fish and Meat
- Tape # 464 - Honoring Levi'im
- Tape # 508 - The City Of Yericho

- Tape # 552 - Kavod Sefer Torah Vs Kavod Talmid Chochom

New! Yad Yechiel Institute is on-line! Visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org> ! For information via email, you may also write to tapes@yadyechiel.org.

Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from:

Yad Yechiel Institute

PO Box 511

Owings Mills, MD 21117-0511

Call (410) 358-0416 for further information.

Also Available: Mesorah / Artscroll has published a collection of Rabbi Frand's essays. The book is entitled:

Rabbi Yissocher Frand: In Print

and is available through your local Hebrew book store or from Project Genesis, 1-410-654-1799.
