

בס"ד

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Berochoh

23 Tishrei, 5780 – October 22, 2019

Compiled from the works of  
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
Parshas Berochoh**

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**Rashi in His Own Words**

דברים ל"ד, ח': וַיִּכְבּוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וַיִּתְּמוּ יָמָיו בְּכִי אֶבֶל מֹשֶׁה:  
רש"י ד"ה בני ישראל: הזכרים, אבל באהרן מתוך שהיה רודף שלום ונותן שלום בין איש לרעהו ובין אשה לבעלה  
נאמר (במדבר כ, כ"ט) כל בית ישראל, זכרים ונקבות:

**Devorim 34:8:** And the sons<sup>1</sup> of Israel wept for Moshe in the plains of Moav for thirty days; and the days of weeping over the mourning for Moshe came to an end.

**Rashi Heading - The sons of Israel:** The males. However, concerning Aharon, since he used to pursue peace and bring peace between a man and his fellow and between a woman and her husband, it is said<sup>2</sup>, "The whole house of Israel (wept for him)."

**Synopsis**

In this Torah portion, Berochoh, we conclude reading the Five Books of Moshe. We are told of the passing of Moshe, and how all of the "sons" of Israel mourned for him for thirty days. Rashi points out that this was different than the manner in which Aharon was mourned at the time of his passing. The entire house of Israel, men and women alike, cried for Aharon, because he pursued peace "between a man and his fellow, and a woman and her husband." Because Moshe did not engage in this, only the sons of Israel, the men, wept for him. We need to understand Rashi's explanation. Since the Torah is discussing the passing of Moshe, we would think that the emphasis should be on the greatness of Moshe. However, from Rashi's explanation of this verse, it seems that the Torah is telling us that Aharon's greatness surpassed that of Moshe. Why would the Torah use this occasion to teach us the greatness of Aharon?

The fact is that Moshe and Aharon each had a different approach to serving Hashem. Moshe's level, and his mission in life, was truth. He could not deviate from the truth under any

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1. The Hebrew words "בני ישראל" are usually translated as "the children of Israel." The plural of "בן - son," can either be translated as sons, i.e. males, or it can include both males and females. However, here we have translated it as "the sons of." This is in keeping with Rashi's commentary which seems to imply that for the most part the men mourned for Moshe. However, as the Rebbe will explain, there are those who also translate it as "children," i.e. men and women, as well.

2. Parshas Chukas, Bamidbar 20:29.

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circumstances. Aharon's level, on the other hand, was that of kindness. He was occupied in restoring peace to everyone; even if it required deviating from the truth to a certain extent. For the sake of peace, this deviation was absolutely permitted by the Torah. However, Moshe, whose level was the absolute, unabashed truth, was unable to bring himself down to this level.

### **Rashi's Explanation**

This Torah portion, Berochoh, marks the conclusion of all of the five books of the Torah. It is not read on Shabbos, as are all of the other Torah portions. Rather, it is read on the last day of the festival of Sukkos. This day is referred to as Simchas Torah, meaning the day of the rejoicing of the Torah<sup>3</sup>.

The portion tells us of the passing of our teacher Moshe. This came at the end of our forty years of wandering in the desert. After telling us of Moshe's passing, the Torah says that<sup>4</sup>, "And the sons of Israel wept for Moshe in the plains of Moav for thirty days; and the days of weeping over the mourning for Moshe came to an end." Rashi explains that the "sons of Israel" mentioned refers specifically to the males. However, concerning Aharon, both men and women mourned. This was due to the fact that he would pursue peace, bringing peace between a man and his fellow and between a woman and her husband, it is said<sup>5</sup>, "The whole house of Israel (wept for him)."

What Rashi is telling us, is that the mourning for the passing of Aharon was far more intense than the mourning for Moshe. This was because Aharon pursued peace, and brought peace between fellows, and between husbands and wives. He was therefore mourned by men and women alike. Moshe, on the other hand, was primarily mourned by men.

Regarding the mourning for each of them, there are actually two different opinions expressed by our Sages<sup>6</sup>. One is the opinion cited here by Rashi, namely that Moshe was only mourned by the men. The second is, that the reason that the mourning for Aharon was greater than that for Moshe was because Aharon predeceased his younger brother, Moshe. Everyone, without exception, saw how bitterly Moshe cried for Aharon. Out of respect and awe of Moshe, the entire

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3. It has a double meaning; the Jews rejoice with the Torah rejoices with the Jews.

4. Our Parshas, Devorim 34:8.

5. Parshas Chukas, Bamidbar 20:29.

6. See Avos D'Rabbi Nosson Chapter 12, 4. Avos D'Rabbi Nosson is a work written by the Tanna'im, the sages of the Mishnah. It is similar to, and related to Pirkei Avos. It is written at greater length than Pirkei Avos, and provides greater explanation.

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nation cried for Aharon. However, when Moshe was deceased, in as much as there was no one of his stature mourning, only the men cried.

From this we see, that the first explanation, that which is cited by Rashi, is emphasizing the greatness of Aharon. By telling us that (for the most part) the men mourned for Moshe, we see that he did not excel in pursuing peace to the extent that Aharon did. However, the second explanation offered by the Sages is expressing the greatness of Moshe. It was only due to his greatness that all of the Jewish people mourned for Aharon.

### **Difficulties in Understanding Rashi**

This seems to present us with a difficulty. Here the Torah is telling us of the passing of Moshe. One would think, particularly according to Peshat, that it would be appropriate for the Torah to use this occasion to teach us of Moshe's greatness. This is indeed the case. The Torah tells us that<sup>7</sup> "Moshe was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes had not dimmed, nor had he lost his (natural) freshness." Further it says that<sup>8</sup> "there was no other prophet who arose in Israel like Moshe, whom the Lord knew face to face." Why would the Torah tell us here that Moshe was lacking something in which his brother excelled?

Furthermore, we need to understand Rashi's choice of words. We are assuming that Rashi's intent here is to explain why regarding Aharon it says that he was mourned by *all* of the Jewish people, not only the men. This being the case, he should have *begun* his comments by saying that "Concerning Aharon it is said that, 'The whole house of Israel (wept for him).'" From the fact that Rashi begins by saying that "concerning Aharon, since he used to pursue peace and bring peace between a man and his fellow and between a woman and her husband," we see that he is emphasizing the greatness of Aharon as compared to Moshe. Here, where the Torah is telling us of the passing of Moshe, why does Rashi stress the greatness of Aharon as opposed to that of Moshe?

We also need to understand why we do not find in the words of our Sages that Moshe strived to make peace between individuals. We understand from the Torah that Moshe had unparalleled love of fellow Jews<sup>9</sup>. He was dedicated to being the "Faithful Shepherd" of each and every Jew. He took care of all of our needs, both spiritual and material. Spiritually, we find that he

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7. Our Parshah, Devorim 34:7.

8. Our Parshah, Devorim 34:10.

9. The Talmud says in Menochos (65, a) that Moshe loved each and every Jew.

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received the Torah, and taught it to each Jew. He did not limit himself to teaching the basic laws; rather he went into every detailed aspect of Torah.

Materially, we find that the Manna which sustained all of the Jewish people throughout our forty-year sojourn in the wilderness was in his merit. Not only that, but even those material needs which were in the merit of his siblings Miriam and Aharon, came in Moshe's merit after their passing. Despite his total devotion to his nation, we never find that he involved himself with restoring peace among Jews.

### **The Explanation**

The explanation of all of the above is as follows. Because of Moshe's reason for being, G-d did not choose him as His emissary to restore peace among Jews. Rather, that mission was given to his sibling Aharon. The Sages tell us that the manner in which Aharon made peace among Jews was as follows<sup>10</sup>. If he heard that two people were involved in a dispute, he would approach each of them. He would tell one of the disputants that he heard from his fellow how sorry he is. He would go on to say that he really would like to apologize and make peace with him. He would then approach the other, to whom he would say the same thing. In this manner, he would restore peace between the two.

This is termed by the Sages "changing the truth." It was not considered telling a lie. As a matter of fact, peace is so great that the Torah teaches us that for its sake, one may "change the truth"<sup>11</sup>. However, despite the fact that is permissible, it is not in keeping with the level of Moshe. Moshe was a physical manifestation of the Divine attribute of truth. Despite the fact that it is permissible to "change the truth," and is not considered a lie, it nonetheless "conceals" the truth. This is not in keeping with the mission and level of Moshe, which is truth. It is, however, in keeping with Aharon's mission. His attribute was kindness. Moreover, Moshe was so great, that he could not bring himself down to that level. He could not descend to the level of those who can only be brought together by concealing the truth.

Both Moshe and Aharon were great in their own way. Moshe was the one who drew down the Torah from Above. He could not deviate from the truth in the slightest extent. On the other hand, Aharon was able to descend even to one for whom there was a need to conceal the truth, and to reach out to those who were on the lowest levels.

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10. See the Avos D'Rabbi Nosson cited in footnote 3, Chapter 12, 3.

11. See Talmud Yevomos 65, b.

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Throughout Moshe's lifetime, he was totally occupied with his mission in life. He had no room for anything other than the entire truth, with no deviation from it whatsoever. Once his life's mission was complete, and it was time for him to "ascend to ... Mount Nevo<sup>12</sup>," he was able to accept Aharon's level. He could then accept an approach which would bring peace to *each and every* Jew, without exception.

*(Adapted from talks given on the night of Shabbos Chol Hamoed Sukkos, and on Simchas Torah 5742)*

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12. Our Parshah, Devorim 34:1.

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Mr. **Sholom Moshe** ben Reb **Shlomo Meir** Hacoheh ע"ה **Cohen**

Passed away on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 13 Shevat, 5779

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

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