

From the Rabbi's Desk  
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**Stories with a Twist**  
**[329]**

**Moses Rejoiced at this Matter...**  
Insights into RaSHI on Deuteronomy 29:3



**Background to Our Story**

**Deuteronomy 29:3**

וְלֹא־נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֵב לְדַעַת וְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת וְאָזְנוֹת לִשְׁמָע עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

Yet to this day, the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.

**Deuteronomy 31:9**

וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וַיִּתְּנָהּ אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי לֵוִי הַנְּשָׂאִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה וְאֶל־כָּל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Moses wrote down this Teaching (Torah) and gave it to the priests, sons of Levi, who carried the Ark of the Lord's Covenant, and to all the elders of Israel.



Why did Moses give the Torah specifically to the sons of Levi?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 5 \_\_\_\_\_

**Deuteronomy 27:9**

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם אֶל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הִסָּכֶת | וּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִהְיִיתָ לְעַם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying: Silence! Hear, O Israel! Today you have become the people of the Lord your God:

**Exodus 32:19-29**

As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he became enraged; and he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf that they had made and burned it; he ground it to powder and strewed it upon the water and so made the Israelites drink it.

Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such great sin upon them?" Aaron said, "Let not my lord be enraged. You know that these people are bent on evil. They said to me, 'Make us a god to lead us; for that man Moses, who brought us from the land of Egypt — we do not know what has happened to him.' So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, take it off!' They gave it to me and I hurled it into the fire and out came this calf!"

Moses saw that the people were out of control — since Aaron had let them get out of control — so that they were a menace to any who might oppose them. Moses stood up in the gate of the camp and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come here!" And all the Levites rallied to him. He said to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Each of you put sword on thigh, go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay brother, neighbor, and kin." The Levites did as Moses had bidden; and some three thousand people fell that day. And Moses said, "Dedicate yourselves to the Lord this day — for each of you has been against son and brother — that He may bestow a blessing upon you today."

### The Text: RaSHI on Deuteronomy 29:3

עד היום הזה. שמעתי שאותו היום שנתן משה ספר התורה לבני לוי, כמו שכתוב (דברים ל"א) "ויתנה אל הפהנים בני לוי", באו כל ישראל לפני משה ואמרו לו משה רבנו, אף אנו עמדנו בסיני וקבלנו את התורה ונתנה לנו, ומה אתה משליט את בני שבטך עליה ויאמרו לנו יום מקור לא לכם נתנה, לנו נתנה, ושמח משה על הדבר, ועל זאת אמר להם "היום הנה נהניית לעם וגו'", היום הנה הנותני שאותם דבקים וחפצים במקום:

I heard that on the very day that Moses gave the Torah scroll to the sons of Levi, as it is written, (Deuteronomy 31:9) "*And he gave it to the priests the sons of Levi*", all Israel came before Moses and said to him: Moses, our teacher! We also stood at [Mount] Sinai and accepted the Torah, and it was [also] given to us! Why, then, are you giving the members of your tribe control over it, so that someday in the future they may claim, "It was not given to you-it was given only to us!"

Moses rejoiced at this matter and in reference to this he said to them, (Deuteronomy 27:9) "This day, you have become a people [to the Lord your God]," meaning; It is today that I have come to understand that you are attached to the Omnipresent and desire Him.



**Explaining the Story** - What is going on in our story? (Explain the sequence of events)

### Comprehension and Analysis Questions

**?** Our short story comes to interpret the verse: "*Yet to this day, the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear*" (Deuteronomy 29:3). How could Moses say that they (the Children of Israel) didn't have a heart or eyes or ears? What changed on that day? (Devash)

**Bonus ?** "All Israel came before Moses and said to him: Moses, our teacher; we, too, stood at Sinai and accepted the Torah, and it was given to us..." What could have Moses replied to the claim of the Children of Israel? **Extra Bonus**

**?** Why didn't he?

**?** Why did Moses rejoice after hearing the claim of *all Israel*?

**?** Why is it so important to make sure that every Jew feels they are connected to the Torah? (Devash)

### **"The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from This Text.**

**!** You only are connected to what you desire strongly enough to fight for.



Our short story -one of the few stories brought by RaSHI without quoting any midrash, depicts the Children of Israel accusing Moses of favoritism by giving the Torah to his own tribe, the sons of Levi, as opposed to all of them. Moses, far from reacting poorly to the Children of Israel's accusation, rejoices in their desire for the Torah and the connection with HaShem, reminding all of us that we only are connected to what we desire strongly enough to fight for.



Instead of Moses rubbing the peoples' noses in the dirt reminding them of their past mistakes and sins, he wisely chose a positive outlook and concentrated on future positive behavior for the Jewish community!!

Smart move, Moshe Rabeinu! (Inez Levi)