

Scripture. They couch their feeling in quasi-scholarly terms – since maidservants were present to do her bidding, a miraculous extension of her arm is an unnecessary miracle and so there was no need for God to overturn “Nature” in this case. In fact, you could go so far as to say they’re embarrassed by this teaching of the Sages which Rashi merely cited.

Well, my friends, they’re not called ‘Sages’ universally within the Torah world for naught. One way “the Torah is acquired” [Avos 6:6] is having “faith in the Sages.” Now, **faith** is meant to take over when our **understanding** comes up short. Moreover, Rashi’s name is taken as an acrostic for רבן של ישראל (“the teacher of all Israel”). He is regarded as the preeminent Rabbinic expositor of the Written [& Oral] Torah out of all his distinguished colleagues.

Because King David ז"ע was finely attuned to the pulse and emotions of the Jewish Nation, he anticipated their less-than-ideal reaction to Rashi’s second teaching. King David offered sound advice and insight to anyone accusing the holy Torah of “primitive, unsophisticated thinking.”

a.) Maimonides ז"ע [Yad, Laws of Kings 3:6] explains: the king's heart is the heart of the entire Congregation of Israel. [Cited by HaRav HaGaon Mordechai Gifter ז"ע (of saintly memory), in his Hebrew preface to Artscroll Tehillim.]

b.) Unveil my eyes that I may behold wonders from Your Torah [Psalm 119:18].

I.e., the wonders are assuredly already there – ANY shortcoming/deficiency “perceived” in Torah stems from non-seeing eyes and clogged-up minds. In the same vein, Albert Einstein ע"ה was called “the Dullard” in his early school years. His genius was beyond their ken to fathom. His thought processes were too unlike their own. They were left to project their limitations onto him. One reason the Talmud calls the blind “full of light” is that a sighted but functionally blind person sees nothing special when presented with an overabundance of light. (The deeper reason is that the blind amply over-compensate for their lack of physical vision with other faculties and abilities.)

The Lubavitcher Rebbe ז"ע often reminded others that the Torah is called תורת חיים (“the Torah of life”) because it contains lessons (plural of הוראה, “instruction”) for life. This passage is no different. It contains the Torah’s primer on an area of life that doesn’t receive much attention/focus in the commentaries or even in yeshiva and seminary classrooms. There is, however, a GREAT need for education and discussion ... with one overarching consideration: that it be done על טהרת הקודש – that it takes place with utmost sensitivity to holiness and purity and CLEAN speech.

Let’s rewind momentarily to the first verses (2:1-2). You will NEVER come across a more generic description of marriage, conception, and childbirth. No names are identified. R’ Hirsch ז"ע enlightens us as to why. Soon, the great miracles performed by Moses ז"ע were about to begin. The human tendency would be to deify Moses for his supernatural “powers.” For this reason, the Narrative stresses the mundane pattern of his birth and traces his genealogy at this point precisely after he was already introduced into the storyline.

Scripture (really, God, its Author) places the marriage of Moses’ parents in 2:1. These digits form the integer 21, which is the ordinal number of the current civil (Gregorian) century (when the secret of this matter would be publicized). Furthermore, in Hebrew “21” is the square root of “truth” (אמת/emes, of numerical value 441). Thus, “21” symbolizes the specialness of representing the “root of truth.” Moreover, Avos 5:22 teaches that at 18 one should [begin ideally to] pursue marriage. Practically speaking, nowadays 21 is still a ripe age for marriage.

When does one begin to prepare for marriage? Either 18 or 21 is WAY too late. Questions have already arisen with the physical changes of puberty. To stifle natural curiosity until groom-to-be and bride-to-be classes after engagement borders on “cruel and unusual punishment.” To cite the Pesach seder, great emphasis is placed on arousing the children’s questions. How can you encourage intellectual stimulation in most areas and discourage it in an obvious area? To do so would be raising compartmentalized individuals, with compromised healthy outlook.

Not every parent is well-prepared for the “heart-to-heart” talk. Fortunately, we have God’s holy Torah to guide us. This Rashi is only tangentially concerned with how Basya reached Moses. One only need apply the proper key to unlock the puzzle. This matter has been concealed hitherto behind a gender and limb context switch. The Talmud [Jastrow ע"ז: TB, Shabbos 108b; TB, Niddah 13a; TB, Bava Kamma 19b] reports that אמה is one CLEAN label for the male sex organ. Our Rashi is none other than the Torah’s springboard for so-called “sex education” discussion.

Picture a father and son (or perhaps an elder brother or another “father figure”) studying this Rashi around puberty (or earlier). The father turns to his son and says, “My dearest son, there is a part of man’s adult anatomy that under certain circumstances extends just like Rashi describes Basya’s arm. When you were younger, it was too early/premature to talk about it. Now that Hashem and the Torah considers you a man, the timing is right. If we study this passage properly, we can learn what Hashem wants us to know about this very important phenomenon.”

A flurry of related lessons/insights (in no particular order):

1.) The Torah is a special multi-tiered treasure. Accessible in some measure to a five-year-old (the normative age for beginning “Bible” study), it is an inexhaustible/endsless font of wisdom and inspiration to the most talented veteran Torah scholar/genius. It is an invaluable lifelong “companion” and guide.

2.) Alas, with the passage of the centuries, there has been an erosion in the bond between the Torah and the Jewish People. True in-depth meditation has been eclipsed by merely parroting Rashi’s words, for example. There has crept in a distancing from the text. This was not the way during Talmudic times. The Talmud relates that a certain Sage would regularly travel to Rome to advocate for his people. He would prepare by intense study of Esau-related passages. He was successful. Once, he neglected to prepare and his mission failed. This is the authentic Torah way.

3.) “In the beginning,” we had Avos’ [5:21] teaching: Turn it [the Torah] over and turn it over, for everything is in it. Nowadays, we have to have our advice packaged into groom-to-be and bride-to-be classes conducted by non-family members. “O Hashem, recall what has befallen us” [Lamentations 5:1]. To borrow an expression: A plunge from a high roof to a deep pit [TB, Chagigah 5b].

4.) We can readily see that the teaching [TB, Sotah 11b] – R’ Avira taught: In the merit of the נשים צדקניות (“righteous women”) that were in that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt– can be adapted and extended to the **non-Jewess** Egyptian princess Basya, who was a *tzaddeikes* (a saintly, righteous woman) as lofty Oral Torah teachings about her amply document. This extends beyond the Egyptian Redemption to the ultimate Redemption as well when we consider another eschatological teaching of the Sages [Midrash, Exodus Rabbah 82:4] – the first Redeemer (i.e., Moses) is the last Redeemer (i.e., the Messiah/Moshiach).

5.) There's no reason a mother or elder sister couldn't conduct such a tête-à-tête [females-only counterpart] session. We derive this from Miriam's active presence on the scene. Miriam was wise beyond her years and already deeply involved in the most intimate aspects of her parents' marital relationship.

6.) A Talmudic Sage who made an unusually bold and intrusive move to learn his master's conduct during intimacy defended his unprecedented actions by stating [TB, Berachos 62a] תורה היא, וללמוד אני צריך ("It, too, is Torah and I must learn it!").

7.) There is analogy/metaphor at work here. We will need to thread our way through a mini-maze of Torah sayings. Moses' basket was floating in water (viz., Egypt's god, the Nile). Similarly, a main purpose of the limb extension was for the purpose of drawing down a soul from Heaven to float in the amniotic fluid in the mother's "belly" (womb). In Torah thought, 'Heaven' (שמים) is a contraction of שם מים ("there, water is") and is a blend of [the primitive elements] אש ומים ("fire and water"). Water flows from a high place (e.g., Heaven) to a low place (e.g., earth). The Sages posit [TB, Menachos 110a] that even idolators acknowledge Hashem as the supreme God of gods. Thus, unless they are entrapped by "the Nile" (which sounds like 'DENIAL') that Hashem is intimately involved in mankind's affairs being too aloof, they recognize the miracle of birth as the blessed Creator's own handiwork.

8.) The Psalmist echoes these noble sentiments and commits them for posterity into holy Scripture. It is noteworthy that the following passage is specifically from "the Egyptian Hallel," reflecting their underlying origin in the implicit metaphor from the incident involving the infant Moses and Basya, Egyptian King Pharaoh's righteous princess-daughter.

⁵ Who is like Hashem our God,
the One Who is enthroned on high,
⁶ – Yet deigns to look so low
upon the heavens and the earth? ...
⁹ He transforms the barren woman of the house
into a joyful mother of children. *Hallelujah!*

[Psalm 113:5, 6, 9, (Artscroll+)]

9.) The above-mentioned admixture of elemental fire and water mold our experience of sex. In the first chapter of Tanya, the author outlines the traces of the four elements (viz., earth, water, fire, air) in our souls. One trait fire is associated with is passion. Self-explanatory. One trait water is associated with is pleasure – reflecting the physical reality that "all pleasures are ultimately cultivated from water" (Practical Tanya).

10.) The Biblical Garden of Eden was actually "a garden of pleasure." We derive this from the statement of Sarah the Matriarch [Genesis 18:12, (Artscroll, NIV)]: "After I have withered, shall I again have pleasure?" [Heb.: *edna*, linguistically related to 'Eden']. In the Garden of Eden, sex was originally shame-free, performed in all innocence. Adam was placed there [Genesis 2:15] "to till and guard it." After Eve's formation, however, these same two Hebrew words can be reinterpreted to mean: "to serve and safeguard HER." The Divine blessing for 90-year-old Sarah to conceive and give birth to Isaac meant that, indeed, she **would** experience sexual pleasure in her golden years. The very name Isaac, couched in the future tense, is associated with the sexual experience [Rashi to Genesis 21:9, based partially on Exodus 39:17].

11.) Pleasure is associated with Shabbos, as the Isaiah the Prophet declares [58:13]: וקראת לשבת עונג (“*And you shall call the Shabbos day a delight!*”) Thus, was born the general custom of Friday night, known as “*mitzva night*,” as being reserved for intimacy.

12.) In connection with this idea, King David makes an astounding promise. *Take pleasure in Hashem, and **He will grant you your heart's desires*** [Psalm 37:4]. This simple guarantee involves radical paradigm shifts on two fronts. One: to get all your wishes granted, the following are NOT necessary: study; lengthy prayers; charity; psalms; fasts; self-mortification and flagellation; etc. Only delighting in Hashem! Two: Shabbos is NOT an onerous weekly **burden** and king-sized hassle [see Amos 8:5 about waiting impatiently for Shabbos to end] – an annoying LONG list of DON'T-DO behaviors. Straighten out your thinking and stand back – ready to receive Hashem's showering of blessings.

13.) There is MUCH MORE that can be derived here. However, I can't lose sight of my original mandate: demonstrate the existence of a *simple* Bible code to unlock the passage and NOT a comprehensive treatise on the Torah's teachings on sex.