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MASKIL LE'DAVID

Why Did Moshe Rabbeinu Wish to Evade the Mission?

"The wrath of Hashem burned against Moshe and He said, 'Is there not Ahron your brother, the Levi? I know that he will surely speak; moreover, behold, he is going out to meet you and when he sees you he will rejoice in his heart'" (Shemot 4:14).

Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe in the burning bush and instructed him to go to Bnei Yisrael and tell them of their imminent redemption. He was told to also reveal the fact that Hashem has promised to guide them through the Wilderness, give them the Torah, and bring them to the Promised Land. Hashem presented Moshe with signs and wonders to perform for Bnei Yisrael so they should believe he is Hashem's messenger and not fabricating the information.

Moshe Rabbeinu does not wish to perform this mission and tells Hashem he is unsuitable for the task since he is "heavy of mouth and heavy of speech." Even though Hashem promises Moshe that He will be with him, as it says, "I shall be with your mouth," Moshe continues to protest. Once Moshe feels he has presented all his arguments and can no longer refuse, he suggests to Hashem, "Send through whomever You will send." He was implying that Ahron, who was accustomed to carrying out these kinds of missions, should perform this mission too and redeem Am Yisrael from Egypt (*Shemot Rabba* 3:16).

In light of the exchange that took place between Hashem and Moshe, we are left with a question: From where did Moshe garner the strength to dare refuse Hashem time after time, despite Hashem giving him the power to perform miracles and promising him Divine protection? Obviously if Hashem chose Moshe, he is the most suitable person to carry out the task. How do we understand Moshe's resistance?

We can reconcile the matter in the following way: Hashem took note of how Moshe conducted himself with people. Despite his princely status, he lowered himself and went to observe his brothers' burden, even sharing the burden with them. In addition, after killing an Egyptian man using the Holy Name and hiding him in the sand, Datan and Aviram

reported this act to Pharaoh who wished to take away Moshe's position and even kill him. However, since the Egyptian was no longer alive, Moshe could have denied any connection to the deed for there was lack of sufficient proof. With Datan and Aviram not being able to prove their case, the king could have killed them, claiming they had come with a false report. But Moshe, due to his greatness, preferred to leave the palace and flee for his life, so as not to cause problems for Datan and Aviram.

Seeing Moshe's great compassion for his people, and how he was constantly troubled by their suffering and looked for ways lighten their burden, Hashem chose him to be the leader of His people. He considered Moshe the most suitable individual to redeem Bnei Yisrael from the bondage.

Due to Moshe's great modesty, he was very concerned that as a result of this mission he might start to feel superior to Bnei Yisrael and become proud and arrogant. Since this could *chalila* blemish his fear of Heaven, he pleaded his case time and again and tried to get out of the mission.

Chazal tell us (*Brachot* 32b), "Everything is in the hands of Heaven, besides fear of Heaven." The meaning is that in all other areas of life, like Torah study and mitzvah fulfillment, a person can merit Heavenly assistance to succeed and progress. But on the other hand, there is one specific area where the Upper world has no power and all elevation and growth is dependent solely on a person's will. That realm is *yirat Shamayim*, where a person's level is entirely due to his desire and personal growth. This being the case, we can say that despite Hashem's promise to be with Moshe and afford him special protection, Moshe was still concerned about performing this mission, since fear of Heaven is something that is acquired independently and Hashem's special protection would not help ward off pride.

When Moshe realized that all his arguments had been refuted by Hashem, he said, "Send through whomever You will send." He did not mention Ahron's name specifically, since Moshe knew his brother Ahron was humble and modest.

In the end, Moshe agreed, because he relied on the dictum which states, "A person is led in the way he wishes to go." Also, Hashem told Moshe that indeed Ahron will rejoice at his brother's good fortune. Moshe inferred from this that the mission will not blemish his good *middot*, and he will be able to continue serving Hashem with fear and submission.

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Shemot



Hilula

18 Tvet
Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech
Shapira, author
of *Bnei Yissachar*

19 Tvet
Rabbi Avraham Shmuel
Binyomin Sofer,
the Ksav Sofer

20 Tvet
Rabbeinu Moshe Ben
Maimon

21 Tvet
Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz,
Hy"d

22 Tvet
Rabbi Shmuel Heller

23 Tvet
Rabbi Avraham Plagi

24 Tvet
Rabbi Yissachar Meir, Rosh
Yeshiva of Yeshivat Hanegev





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

The Redemption Will Bring Comfort

“And these are the names of the children of Israel” (Shemot 1:1).

Why were Esav and Yishmael not subjected to the Egyptian bondage? Were they not also children of Avraham Avinu?

The answer can be understood through the following parable, brought by the *Midrash*:

Rabbi Elazar said, “To what can this be compared? To one who borrows money from the king and after a few days the borrower dies, leaving behind two children. One flees and the other one, one of the king’s officers, remains. The king said to the officer: ‘I demand that you be the one to repay your father’s loan!’ The son replied: ‘Because I serve you, I need to lose out.’” The king replied: ‘Nevertheless, I will reward you greatly. When [your brother] is captured, I will give him to you as a servant.’”

So too concerning the future it says: “And [those of] the southland will inherit the Mountain of Esav” (Ovadia 1:19). In the end Esav and Yishmael will become our servants.

A Person’s Name Affects His Essence

“The name of the first was Shifrah and the name of the second was Puah” (Shemot 1:15).

Why did Pharaoh change Yocheved and Miriam’s names to Shifra and Puah, which are Egyptian names?

The Rebbe of Riminov, *zt”l*, explains: Pharaoh knew that as long as the midwives, Yocheved and Miriam, are called Jewish names, there is no way he can challenge them with this cruel decree of killing Jewish children. Therefore, he first commanded them to change their names, hoping that Egyptian names will have an effect on their state of mind and change their essence and character, to the extent that they will now be capable of murdering Jewish children. Only after that did he order them, “If it is a son, you are to kill him.”

A person’s name is his essence. It is absorbed in his innermost being and greatly influences his spirit and character.

The Mouth as Our Weapon

“... and they cried out. Their outcry went up to Hashem” (Shemot 2:23).

Am Yisrael’s most powerful weapon is its mouth. “The voice is the voice of Yaakov but the hands are the hands of Esav.”

Esav lives by the sword, while the power of Am Yisrael is through their mouth. Their prayers are heard on high and they are saved in the merit of their Torah study.

But as every soldier knows, it is not enough to go to battle equipped with a rifle and ammunition. Even knowing how to aim and shoot is not enough. There is another basic requirement: the rifle must be spotless and rust-free!

In this vein, the Od Yosef Chai explains that a person who desires to see his prayers answered, must take care that his mouth be unsoiled by all forms of forbidden speech, for example, *lashon hara*, mockery, falsehood and tale bearing.

Bnei Yisrael guarded their tongues in Egypt as Chazal tell us, “They did not change their language.” In this merit their cry rose up to Heaven and they were redeemed from their exile.

Starting the Mitzvah Brings Heavenly Assistance

“So now, go! I shall be with your mouth” (Shemot 4:12).

Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar, *zy”a*, the holy Ohr Hachaim, explains that Moshe Rabbeinu did not understand why Hashem chose him to go speak to Pharaoh, if he has “sealed lips.”

What did Hashem answer him? “So now, go!” I only perform miracles for those who begin the mitzvah. Once they have taken some action, they merit Heavenly assistance and will see miracles.

This teaches us that one who wishes to merit Divine assistance should take the first step and then help will come.

FROM THE TREASURY



Based on the teachings of Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto, shlita**

Moshe’s Birth

“The woman conceived and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was good and she hid him for three months” (Shemot 2:2).

Once at the Shabbat table, we were discussing Yocheved giving birth to Moshe at the age of one hundred and thirty. We do not find that the Torah describes the wonder and excitement of the population on hearing that a baby had been born to someone so old. On the other hand, when Sara Imeinu gave birth to Yitzchak at the age of ninety, the Torah details the elation and amazement at the great miracle. Sara herself laughed in her heart and did not believe this miracle would indeed occur to her.

One can explain that when Yitzchak was born, there was no Torah in the world and Hashem’s sovereignty was not recognized by the general population, therefore Sara giving birth at such an old age caused great excitement and awe. The people at that time did not believe there is a Power capable of changing the normal order of the world, allowing a woman to give birth despite her advanced age. On the other hand, when Moshe was born, the tribe of Levi were studying Torah in the yeshiva in Goshen. Bnei Levi understood that the power of Torah can change nature and bring about great miracles. Since they were aware of Hashem’s power of running the world above the confines of nature, Moshe’s birth was not a cause for surprise. They believed the Torah bestows the possibility of deliverance, even in a miraculous way.

As far as the rest of Bnei Yisrael were concerned, who were not from the tribe of Levi and not involved in Torah study, we could possibly answer that due to their extremely harsh bondage, they were not open to noticing what was going on around them and did not have time to contemplate the miracle. The Egyptians, on the other hand, despite being far from Torah observance, were aware of an elevated power their slaves possessed. They therefore attributed the birth of a baby by an elderly mother as just another miracle in the chain of miracles that enable Am Yisrael to exist.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Miracle of the Shabbat Candles

“And this staff you shall take in your hand, with which you shall perform the signs” (Shemot 4:17).

The Bnei Yissachar, in *Ma’amarei HaShabbatot* (Klal 3:5), quotes the Midrash on the verse, “G-d blessed the seventh day,” where five Sages expound on the way in which Hashem blessed the Shabbat: Rabbi Eliezer says, He blessed it with “*ner*” — light. On this, the Midrash brings a wonderful story: **“Rabbi Eliezer said, I once lit the candles on Friday night, and on Motzei Shabbat I came and found that nothing had burned away.”**

The Bnei Yissachar asks: Is the story that happened to the Tana Rabbi Eliezer something unusual?! We are talking about exceedingly holy Tana'im and Amora'im who lived above nature. However, when Chazal tell us something, they wish to teach us a lesson. But would such a thing happen to a regular Jew?

“Indeed,” he declares, **“we must come to the conclusion that this is how it is for every Jewish person; the Shabbat candles burn longer than candles lit during the week”** In parentheses he adds, “It seems that those who have deeper understanding, know this is true.”

The Maggid, Rabbi Ahron Teusig, *shlita*, told over the following story:

Every Friday night I give a shiur in Vizhnitz. Four years ago, I mentioned the above explanation from the Bnei Yissachar and delved into the topic at length. On Sunday I received a phone call:

The caller related: “I live in Yerushalayim and work at the stock-exchange in Ramat Gan. I work together with a certain Jewish man who lives on a Kibbutz. He is a Holocaust survivor and unfortunately far from any religious observance. He questioned me about the idea of the Shabbat candles burning for longer. I told him that Harav Teusig said he can testify that it is true.”

“The Kibbutznik said: ‘I am going to experiment. My wife will light Shabbat candles for a few weeks and if we see that indeed they stay alight for longer, I promise to return to my roots.’”

Two months later, he called me again. He said that his friend from the Kibbutz told him that every Shabbat his candles burn for longer than the expected time! He is extremely moved and as a result has started praying three times a day and laying tefillin after fifty years of neglecting this mitzvah!

Before Rosh Hashanah, this Jew from the Kibbutz asked to speak to me on the phone. He started crying bitterly. “You don’t know me,” he said, “so I can cry to you. I had fallen so low *R”l*. After the Holocaust, I was left alone, without any family. **You should know, that only in the merit of the Bnei Yissachar’s insight that I witness every Shabbat, do I now once again fully observe Shabbat and all other mitzvot.**



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu
v’Rabbeinu Hagaon Rabbi
David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

A Challenging Calling

A few days before the end of the secular year, a Jew informed me that he was invited to an Xmas celebration.

“Do you intend to go?” I asked.

“Of course not,” he replied. “And it is in the Rav’s merit.”

“In *my* merit?” I was perplexed. “How is that?” I did not remember ever discussing the matter with him.

He explained, “I once heard a recording of a lecture from the Rav, titled *Sacrifice*. The Rav expounded on the ability our nation inherited from our Avot, to withstand challenges. Now, after receiving an invitation to their gentile celebration, I was faced with a difficulty.

I thought to myself that if I was endowed with the strength to stand firm and not participate in this non-Jewish party, I will make use of that power and indeed I declined the offer. Instead, I fixed a study session with a prominent Rabbi during that time.”

I kissed him on the head and proclaimed, “How fortunate are you in this world as well as in the Next.”

How far-reaching is the effect of one inspirational speech! How great is man’s power to sacrifice of himself for the sake of his Creator! This is in the merit of our Avot and Imahot, who paved the path for us by sacrificing their entire lives for the sake of fulfilling Hashem’s command.

When our holy forefathers withstood tribulations, they were the first ones and the only ones. They stood staunchly against the entire world. Let us learn from their deeds, which give us the power as well as the responsibility to emulate them, in spite of the difficulties involved.



GUARD YOUR TONGUE

Forbidden to Believe

It is forbidden to believe *lashon hara* even if it is said in front of the person being spoken about and he does not admit his guilt. All the

more so is one forbidden to believe the *lashon hara* if the speaker just says he would dare say it in the person’s presence.

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Feeling Every Jew



“Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and observed their burdens” (Shemot 2:11).

“What does it mean ‘And he observed’? He saw their suffering and cried and said, ‘I am sorry for them, if only I could die instead of them,’ for there is no harder work than the work of mud, and he would bend his shoulder and help each one of them. If he saw a heavy burden on a small person and a light burden on a big person, a man’s burden on a woman or a woman’s burden on a man, an elderly person’s burden on a young man or a young man’s burden on an elderly person, he would set aside his honor and straighten their load. He would make as if he was helping Pharaoh (and not the Jews). Hashem said: ‘You left your occupation and went to observe the pain of Yisrael and acted like a brother to them, I will leave the Upper and lower worlds to speak to you’” (*Shemot Rabba* 1:27).

Moshe Rabbeinu merited being Bnei Yisrael’s savior since he joined in their suffering. On the words “And observed their burdens,” Rashi writes: “He set his eyes and heart to feel their pain.” The Alter of Kelm explains that Moshe did not behave as most people do, joining in other people’s pain for a short time and then continuing with their lives. Rather he “set his eyes,” he constantly painted a picture of their suffering in front of his eyes, to the extent that he was as concerned for them as he was for himself.

In order to feel someone else’s burden, to understand him, help him and pray for him, the first thing that is called for is to see him, as it says, “And he observed their burdens.”

About Avraham Avinu it says “He lifted his eyes and saw: And behold! Three men were standing over him. He perceived, so he ran toward them.” Harav Shach, *zy”a*, explains these words in the following way: “First and foremost Avraham Avinu saw other people. **When you see another person clearly, you understand what he needs.**”

In a talk given by Rabbi Noach Weinberg, *zt”l*, Rosh Yeshiva of Aish HaTorah, he spoke about the subject of sharing in another’s burden. He cried out earnestly that every person carries a private

load on his back, a load packed with difficulties and struggles with which he must cope. Whether it is problems of self-esteem, plans that did not come to fruition, failures, doubts, incompatibility ... This is all part of the challenge of progressing in life.

A person’s external appearance does not necessarily reflect his inner world. Sometimes those who carry the heaviest baggage, on the surface appear to be happy and carefree. Many people prefer to hide their feelings. A person who appears to be calm and put together, might really be coping with an intense inner storm.

Rabbi Weinberg challenged his students: Study people well and try to imagine what is going on inside them. Understand that other people’s problems, their dreams and hopes, are not less real than yours. Just like you, every one carries some kind of burden. Focus on this and ask yourself: “What are they carrying around?” Use your imagination to feel how this load makes life hard for them.

Be sensitive. Is this person happy or sad? Vulnerable or resilient? Apprehensive or confident? Pay attention and then you will be capable of sharing his challenges.

“The first place to put these ideas into practice,” Rabbi Weinberg explained, “is with your family and friends. A lack of understanding and empathy, is the main cause of resentment among family members. When you go home, try to understand what your wife is feeling. Think about what she does every day so the house should function properly. Talk about this and show her you understand that she works hard. Look for different ways to make her life easier.

Here is another example: A *bachur* who comes home and buries his head in a newspaper while going through a plate of food, insults his parents. He gives the impression that his house is at his disposal, with parents in the background who pay for his expenses. Take a moment to notice your mother when you arrive home. What is she thinking about? Is something bothering her? Is she happy about something? Pay attention!

Our children must be our primary concern. We love them and feel their hurt when they are in pain. But are we capable of feeling where they are holding? To get into one’s children’s shoes can be a very hard task, for it requires recognition of the fact that they are independent people. The implication of this perception is that it is time to stop focusing on the pain they have caused you by not fulfilling your dreams and start focusing on the way their challenges are affecting *them*.

This is the task incumbent on every Jew: To share in another person’s burden and feel for their suffering.

Pray for Classmates

The following story came to light a few years ago: Somebody told Maran Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, *zt”l*, about a yeshiva *bachur* who had two older sisters who were still single. This matter was troubling the *bachur* greatly, to the extent that he could not concentrate on his learning. When he would return home, even before saying hello, he would ask his mother if there was any news about his sisters.

In the name of this *bachur*, the visitor asked Maran for a blessing that the sisters find their match quickly, which would enable the boy to continue striving in Torah.

What did Maran answer the visitor?

“I would like to give you some advice. Take a paper and write down: 1. To commit to be exceptionally careful not to speak *lashon hara*. 2. Not to speak critically about anyone. 3. Not to bear a grudge against anyone. 4. It is also very important that no one should bear a grudge against the [sisters], therefore if there is any likelihood that they caused someone any suffering, they should appease that person, ask for forgiveness, and request that they no longer hold a grudge. **5. They should pray for other friends who need *shidduchim*.**”

When he finished writing everything down, he showed the paper to Maran, who approved what was written.

This is the lesson we can derive from “He set his eyes and heart to feel their pain.”



“Contemplate and see that Hashem is good”

Exciting update: With *siyata diShmaya*, the *shiurim* of Moreinu v’Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto *shlit”a*, are now available in Hebrew, English, French and Spanish

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