

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 told him to go to Bnei Yisrael and announce the imminent redemption. He should inform them that Hashem was about to redeem them from Mitzrayim with signs and wonders, guide them through the Midbar, give them the Torah and then bring them into the Promised Land. Hashem presented Moshe with signs and wonders to perform for Bnei Yisrael, so that they should believe that he is Hashem's messenger and not only fabricating this information.

Moshe Rabbeinu does not wish to perform this mission that Hashem asked him to carry out and pleads with Hashem that 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 refuse and tries with all his might to get out of this command. Once Moshe felt that he had already presented all his arguments and he 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 Mitzrayim (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 and dare to refuse Hashem time after time, despite Hashem giving him the power to perform wonders and miracles and promising him Divine protection? We would imagine that if Hashem chose Moshe, he should have performed the mission without questioning since Hashem knows who is the most suitable person to carry out a 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 the 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 his position and even kill him. In fact, since the Egyptian was no longer alive, Moshe could have denied any connection to the deed as there was a lack of sufficient proof. By Datan and Aviram not being able to prove their case, the king could have killed them, claiming that they had come with a false report. But Moshe, due to his greatness, preferred to leave the palace and flee for his life, in

order not to cause any trouble for Datan and Aviram with the king.

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

Due to Moshe Rabbeinu's great modesty and self-effacement, he was very concerned that as a result of this mission that he was about to be entrusted with, he might start to feel superior to Bnei Yisrael and become proud and arrogant. This is why he tried time and again to 'convince' Hashem that he was unsuitable. Moshe certainly had no desire, G-d forbid, to emerge victorious from this argument with Hashem. The opposite is true: Since Moshe was so afraid of pride and conceit which could chalila blemish his yirat shamayim, this is why he tried to get out of the mission.

Chazal tell us (Brachot 32b), "Everything is in the hands of heaven, besides yirat shamayim". 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 in this area 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 promising to be with Moshe and affording him special protection, Moshe was still concerned about performing this mission since yirat shamayim is something that is acquired independently, therefore Hashem's special protection will not help to ward off pride which could impair his yirat shamayim.

When Moshe realized that all his arguments and claims had been refuted by Hashem, he said, "send through whomever You will send!". He did not mention Ahron's name specifically, since Moshe knew that his brother Ahron was humble and modest, as the Torah tells us (Shemot 16:7), "for what are we that you should incite complaints against us?". The word וּבַחֲנוּנוֹ, "for what are we", is missing the letter 'alef', (it is normally written וּבַחֲנָנוֹ), since the 'alef' signifies the fact that he negated his ego and independence and made himself out to be nothing. Since we are told that "the fulfillment of a person's will is his honor" and "in the way that a person wishes to go, he is led", and also because of the fact that Hashem told Moshe that indeed Ahron will rejoice at his brother Moshe's good fortune, Moshe can infer from this that the mission will not blemish his good middot and he will be able to continue serving Hashem with fear and submission.

Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • Fax: +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hilula

21 - Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz hy" d

22 - Rabbi Shmuel Heller

23 - Rabbi Avraham Plagi

24 - Rabbi Yissachar Meir, Rosh Yeshivat Hanegev

25 - Rabbi Ya'akov HaLevi of Chassidei Beit El

26 - Rabbi Shalom Yitzchak Mizrachi

27 - Rabbi Yitzchak of Krakow, author of 'Siach Yitzchak'



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik 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 merit of the Rav."

"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 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 and only ones to stand staunchly against the entire world. Let us learn from their courageous deeds, which give us the power as well as the responsibility to emulate them, in spite of the many difficulties involved.

The Haftarah

"The words of Yirmiyahu the son of Chilkiyahu" (Yirmiyahu 1,2)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah tells about Yirmiyahu who at first refused to perform the mission that Hashem requested from him by saying that he doesn't know how to speak for he is just a youth. In this Parsha Moshe Rabbeinu tried to absolve himself of Hashem's mission by saying that he is not a man of words.

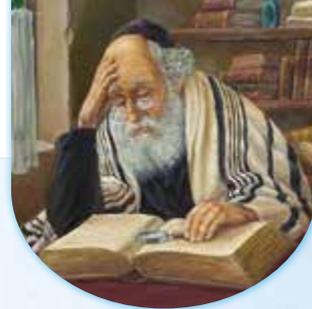
Ashkenazim read from Yeshaya 27, **"[Days] are coming when Ya'akov will take root"**.

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, if he does not admit his guilt. All the more so, if he does not say it in the person's presence, but only adds that he would dare to say it in front of him, it is forbidden to believe him for the above reason.

Due to our numerous sins, this is, unfortunately, something that causes many people to stumble...



Words of our 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', with 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 burnt away.'

The Bnei Yissachar asks: When Chazal tell us something, they wish to teach us a lesson. 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. But would such a thing happen to a regular Jew?

"Indeed," he declares, "we must derive from this that this is how it is for every Jewish person, the Shabbat candles burn for longer than candles lit during the week, this one has a large amount and the other has a small amount." In parentheses, he adds, "It seems to be that those who understand know that this is true".

The Maggid, Rabbi Ahron Toisig 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 I examined the topic at length. On Sunday I received a phone call:

"I live in Yerushalayim and work in the stock-exchange in Ramat Gan. I work together with a certain Jewish man who lives on a Kibbutz. He is a Holocaust survivor, who is unfortunately far from any religious observance, G-d forbid not deliberately. He questioned me about the idea of the Shabbat candles burning for longer. He wanted to know if it was really true. I told him that Harav Toisig said that he can testify that it is true."

This 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." Due to this, the man on the phone wished to know the source of the statement.

Two months later, he called me again and told me that his friend from the Kibbutz was extremely moved and told him that every Shabbat his candles burn for longer than the expected time, and in light of this he has already started praying three times a day and he began laying tefilin 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, "I can talk to you and cry. I had fallen so low r"l, G-d forbid not deliberately. I was left alone, without any family. Know, that only in the merit of the 'Bnei Yissachar' that I witness every Shabbat, do I now keep Shabbat in full and have returned to Torah observance...



Pearls of the Parsha

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 a"h?

The answer can be understood through the following mashal, brought by the 'Midrash Avcir':

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 is one of the king's officers. 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 and when the second son 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" (Ovadiah 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 to 'Shifra' and 'Pu'ah', 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 Is 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 Ya'akov 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 out 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 and having an effect must take care that his mouth be unsoiled by forbidden speech, lashon hara, mockery, falsehood and tale-bearing.

Bnei Yisrael guarded their tongues in Mitzrayim and 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 zya"a, the holy Ohr Hachaim, explains that Moshe Rabbeinu did not understand why Hashem chose him to go and 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 then 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.

Treasures

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)

At the Shabbat table, my son n"y was asked about 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, which is forty years younger than Yocheved was when she gave birth, the Torah clearly writes about the elation and amazement at the great miracle. Sara herself laughed in her heart and did not believe that this miracle would indeed occur to her.

My son was asked why Yitzchak's birth was cause for great celebration, while Moshe's birth passed relatively quietly, even though Yocheved was much older than Sara?

One can answer that since 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 that 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 that the Torah protects those who study it and bestows the possibility of deliverance, even in a miraculous way.

As far as the rest of Bnei Yisrael were concerned, those who were not counted among the tribe of Levi and not involved in Torah study, it could be 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 that their slaves possessed. They, therefore, attributed the birth of a baby to an elderly mother, to just another miracle in the chain of miracles that enable Am Yisrael to exist.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



"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, and a man's burden on a woman and a woman's burden on a man, and an elderly person's burden on a young man, and a young man's burden on an elderly person, he would put set aside his honor and go 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 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 Rabbeinu did not behave as most people do, joining in other people's pain for a short time and then continuing with their lives. But he 'set his eyes', he used his wisdom to constantly paint a picture of their suffering in front of his eyes, to the extent that he was as concerned for them as one who is concerned for his own self.

In order to feel and share someone else's burden, to understand, help and pray for him, it is essential before all, to perceive him, as it says, "and he observed their burdens".

Concerning 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 zya"l explains these words in the following way: "Avraham Avinu, first

of all, 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 in fact every single person carries a private load on his back, a load packed with difficulties and struggles which he must cope with. 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 progression 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 talmidim: "Study people well and try to imagine what is going on inside them. Understand that other people's problems, their dreams and hopes, are no less real than yours. Just like you, everyone 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 zt"l 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 that the house should function properly. Talk about this and show her that you understand that she works hard. Look for different ways to make her life easier.

"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 to 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 recently came to light: Somebody went into Maran Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita and told him about a Yeshiva bachur who has two older sisters who have not yet found their match. "This matter troubles the bachur greatly, to the extent that he cannot concentrate on his learning. His mother tchy' told me that many times when he returns home, even before saying hello, he asks if there is any news about his sister."

In the name of this bachur, he asked Maran for a beracha that his sisters should find their match quickly, which will enable him to continue striving in Torah.

What did Maran shlita answer him?

"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 them, therefore if there is any likelihood that they caused someone to suffer, they should appease them and ask for forgiveness, and ask 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 that we can derive from "He set his eyes and heart to feel their pain".