



פרשת שמות  
Parshat Shmot

אשרינו Ashreinu

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RABBI MOSHE NACHBAR

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HANNAH SHAPIRO (23')

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The discussion that occurs in this week's parsha between Hashem and Moshe is indeed a strange one. How could Moshe disagree with Hashem? How could he petition Hashem and say that he was not right for the

job?! After all, Hashem chose him! He was handpicked by the Creator of the world! That sounds like a pretty good vote of confidence. Surely, if Hashem approached any of us with a task to complete, we would not try to convince him to hire someone else for the job. The question is, what exactly was Moshe asking for?

During this entire dialogue, Hashem "calmly" answers all of Moshe's rebuttals, until Moshe Rabbeinu requests (Shmot 4:13):

"וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי שְׁלַח נָא בְיָד תְּשַׁלַּח"

"But he said, "Please, O Lord, make someone else Your agent."

At this point, Hashem finally responds with anger (Shmot 4:14):

"וַיַּחַר אַף ה' בְּמֹשֶׁה..."

"The LORD became angry with Moses..."

What exactly is Hashem angry about in Moshe's request? What is Moshe asking for here? Rashi comments that Moshe is referring here to his brother, Aharon. When he asks for Hashem to send "someone else", he is asking for Hashem to send Aharon HaKohen. However, the 8th century midrash, Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer, suggests that Moshe was actually referring to someone else entirely. The Midrash writes:

רבון כל העולמים שלח נא ביד תשלח ר"ל ביד אותה האיש שאתה עתיד לשלוח

"Sovereign of all worlds! 'Make someone else your agent' (4:13)—that is to say, by the hand of that man who You will send in the future"

Moshe requests that Hashem send someone else, but not just anyone -- someone who Hashem plans to send "in the future". Who is this individual that Moshe is referring to?

The midrash continues:

ולאותו האיש שאתה אומר אני שולח לעתיד לבא אל  
ישראל שני הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אליהו הנביא

“And as for that man who you request that I should send him to the Jewish people in the future that is to come, so it is said, “Behold, I will send you Eliyahu the prophet before you”

Moshe was requesting that Hashem send Eliyahu Hanavi. We know that Eliyahu Hanavi is the one who will come to notify us of the redemptive era and the coming of Mashiach. Perhaps, the midrash seems to suggest, what Moshe was requesting from Hashem was to end exile and pain for good! Why should the Jewish people have to go through years of trial and tribulation, experiencing pain from the various impending exiles? Moshe was not asking Hashem to send someone who was more qualified or someone who had a better resume, he was asking Hashem to send the final messenger and begin the *geulah*.

However, Hashem says no to this request. Not only that, he becomes angry with Moshe. What was wrong with Moshe's request? Is it not the job of all of us to yearn and pray for Mashiach? Do we not learn from a young age that redemption can occur at any second, and that we should hope for this moment always? What Hashem was teaching Moshe was that redemption is a process, it can not be rushed and each step is necessary, as painful as those steps might be. Moshe desperately wanted the Jewish people to bypass the hardships of the birth pangs of Mashiach. Hashem taught Moshe that this is not how *geulah* works.

In our own lives, we can learn a very important lesson from this conversation between Hashem and Moshe, through the lens of the midrash. We must always remember that exile is necessary to experience redemption, that pain is necessary to taste the sweetness of success and fulfillment. We can not skip steps, Hashem has a plan for his children, on an individual level and on a national one as well. Hashem should bless us all with the wisdom and patience to appreciate every step, to learn from every experience, and to ultimately, greet Eliyahu Hanavi and Mashiach speedily in our days.

## A LITTLE BY LITTLE

HANNAH SHAPIRO (23')

In Parshat Shmot we learn about two midwives who

spare babies from Pharaoh's decree to kill them. They lie to Pharaoh, telling him that the babies are born before they arrive, so that the midwives do not get a chance to

וַיְהִי כִּי יָרְאוּ הַמִּיּוֹדֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בְּתֵימִים

harm them. The pasuk (Shmot 1:21) tells us:

“And it was that the midwives feared Hashem, and He built houses for them.”

This seems like a strange thing to say, so what is really going on here? Rashi teaches us that the maidservants are Yocheved and Miriam, and Hashem built these “homes” for their legacy. The Kohanim will descend from Yocheved and the *malchut*, kings, from Miriam. So what can we learn from this? Miriam and Yocheved did something small, they lied to Pharaoh. Because of their actions, they were greatly rewarded for generations to come. We can learn from this that even the smallest contribution is still important and Hashem appreciates everything we do. We should never downplay our achievements or contributions, because each action is important, even if it doesn't seem to be at the time. Even the smallest step in the right direction is an important part of your self growth.

## THE FIRE WITHIN

CALEB BERMAN (23')

In this week's parsha, Parshat Shmot, we read about Moshe and the burning bush. According to the midrash, Moshe is shepherding his father-in-law's sheep when a baby sheep escapes. As Moshe is chasing it, he stumbles upon a burning bush, yet the bush isn't being consumed.

וַיֵּרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלִבַּת אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּבְתָּה וַיֵּרָא וְהָנֵה  
הַסִּבְתָּה בְּעֵר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּבְתָּה אֵינֶנּוּ אֲכָל

“And an angel of the Hashem appeared to him in a flame of fire from within the thornbush, and behold, the thornbush was burning with fire, but the thornbush was not being consumed” (Shmot 3:2).

Why did Hashem speak to everybody else (Avraham, Yizchak, and Yaakov, etc) normally but when he speaks to Moshe, it is from within this amazing spectacle?

The answer to this question is simple. When Hashem spoke to Moshe, it wasn't meant just for him, it was meant for an entire nation of people. Hashem was asking Moshe to bring the Jews out of Egypt and to Har Sinai, which happens to be the mountain on which

Moshe received this prophecy.

However, this brings another question into play, why did Hashem choose to appear to Moshe specifically from within a burning bush?

I asked this question to my rebbi, Rabbi Stohl, and he gave me the following answer. The burning bush represents our struggles against the impurities of the world. The blazing fire represents a soul that is reaching up to escape the thornbush that is the physical world and to connect with Hashem in *shamayim*.

This poses a huge problem. We can't just leave behind the world and everyone we love!

The solution to this problem is arguably one of the most important messages in Judaism. In order to connect with Hashem, we must all show the burning fire that is in our hearts, the longing to reconnect with Hashem. This fire, however, cannot consume the bush completely. We must not seek to escape the world, even if it sometimes feels like a thornbush. We cannot abandon reality or forget about the people around us, rather, the lesson of the burning bush is to teach us to connect with Hashem and yet not to run away from our struggles. We have to remain strong in our beliefs, despite the thorns that society pushes at us.

Good Shabbos :)

## BE GRATEFUL

AVICHAJ SHEKHTER (22')

Thanks, Thanks, and Thanks!!!

יְהִי מֶלֶךְ הַדָּשׁ עַל מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַע אֶת יוֹסֵף

“A new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Yosef” (Shmot 1:8). The midrash (Shemot Rabbah 1:8) states: “Who did not know Yosef”: Did he really not know Yosef? R. Avin said, this is comparable to one who stoned the king's friend. The king said: Cut off his head, because tomorrow he will do the same to me. Therefore, the pasuk says about [Pharaoh], today – “who did not know Yosef”; tomorrow he will say, “I do not know Hashem”. The Yefei Toar writes in his explanation of this Midrash: “At first, he denied the good that Yosef did for him, and afterwards he deteriorated in his evil to the lowest depths, for he denied Hashem and even was cruel towards a low and shattered nation.” We see that the result of a bad person who does not have gratitude to his friend is that he will refuse to have gratitude to Hashem for everything He gives us.

R. Yonatan Eibshutz writes in his sefer, Ya'arot Dvash, that the root of all negative traits is ingratitude, and therefore, if you are gracious it will be harder to sin. Based on this, we understand why the first sin in the Torah is rooted in ingratitude, as demonstrated in Bereishit (3:1), where we find two sins. The first is the sin of the snake, who Hashem had appointed over all the animals and had given the ability of speech and other things. Despite these gifts, the snake went ahead and was ungrateful to Hashem in convincing Chava to eat from the tree. The second sinner in that same story was Adam HaRishon, when he said:

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאֱשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הוּא נִתְּנָה לִי מִן הָעֵץ וְאֶכְל

“The woman that You gave me, she gave me from the tree and I ate.” (Bereishit 3:12) Therefore, he became the first to be called “ungrateful,” as the gemara says in Avoda Zara (5b) and as Rashi explains: “Adam's retort is an insult because he blames the curse on Hashem's gift, and He made her for him as a helper.”

Based on all this, we can understand the words of the Gemara Bava Kama (16b), “One who does not bow down at Modim – his spine becomes a snake.” Meaning, one who intentionally shows that he is ungrateful and when he reaches the bracha of gratitude to Hashem for His miracles and goodness does not bow down before Him, his spine becomes a snake – who was the first to sin regarding gratitude and was ungrateful to Hashem. Because of this we must thank and show gratitude to everyone who does good for us, despite the fact that he also derives benefit from us, since if we do not train ourselves to thank Him – we will come to be ungrateful to God. As we see in the Gemara Bava Metzia (92b): “The wine is the owner's, and the thanks are given to the waiter.” Meaning, the wine belongs to the king, but those who drink thank the waiter, because it is common courtesy to say thank you and express gratitude to the waiter who serves the wine, since if we don't show gratitude to the one who serves us the goodness, we will ultimately be ungrateful to the owner. Because of this, Rav Soloveitchik zt”l explains that we are careful to say in the Shabbat tefillah *Nishmat*, “Who is lauded with most praises,” and not “all praises” and to thank God only for most of the good that he does with us and not all, because we need to save some feelings of gratitude to those people who are His messengers and also do good things for us.

The great importance of showing gratitude in our hearts appears also in the work of Rav Dessler zt”l, *Michtav*

M'Eliyahu, where he writes that all of a person's traits are affected by emotion and not only by logic. Therefore, we must be grateful also to inanimate objects that we benefit from, so that we can constantly train ourselves to be grateful when we are the recipients of a good deed.

## INTERNAL FIRE

ARIELLA GROSS (21')

In this week's parsha, we read about Moshe's first Divine revelation at the burning bush. The Torah describes it as follows:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מֵדַוְעַ לֹא  
בְּעֵר הַסִּינָי

“And Moshe said, I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?” (Shmot 3:3)

In Bereishit, Hashem had spoken with Adam, Chava, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, among others, without an attention-grabbing scheme. So why now does He reveal Himself through a burning bush?

One opinion is that this revelation was not just for Moshe—it was for the sake of the Jewish people. The bush stood on Har Sinai, where the Jews became a nation after Moshe led them out of Egypt. The purpose of the bush is not merely to grab Moshe's attention; rather, the fire symbolizes the Jews' current hardships in slavery while the unrelenting, lively bush underneath represents their endurance, a trait that extends from the time of Egypt through today.

Another idea is that the fire represents our natural inkling for spirituality—in other words, the fire of the human heart. In order to feel close to Hashem, we must be persistent and strong-willed like the fire. However, our spirituality should not undercut all physical enjoyments; instead, we should use every tool we are given in this world for a meaningful purpose. By removing his shoes due to the holy ground, Moshe demonstrates how physical acts can elevate our spirituality.

The intention of creation and the reason we physical beings are brought into this world is to sanctify its materials. By opening our eyes to all of the miracles around us, especially the ones that feel mundane, we can unearth meaning in any place and perhaps find burning bushes in our own lives.



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