

Hashem said to Aharon, "Go to meet Moshe"...and he went and encountered him at the mountain of G-d, and kissed him. (4:27)

Regarding Aharon's encounter with Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the *Midrash* cites the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 85, "*Chesed v'emes nifgashu, tzedek v'shalom nashuku*," "Kindness and truth have met; righteousness and peace have kissed."

Aharon is the symbol of *chesed*; Moshe represents *emes*. In the second part of the *pasuk*, *tzedek* is the virtue which characterizes Moshe, while Aharon is defined by the virtue of *shalom*. *Horav Elimelech Moller, Shlita*, infers from this *pasuk* that an individual creates his name by his actions and deeds. Thus, when Aharon and Moshe met, it was an encounter of *emes* and *chesed-tzedek* and *shalom*. Moshe and Aharon were so closely identified with their individual attributes that these traits became their essence, the very name by which they continue to be distinguished.

We find a similar idea regarding Shifrah and Puah -- or Yocheved and Miriam. They were the two Jewish midwives who were *moser nefesh*, prepared to sacrifice themselves, to sustain the Jewish male babies. *Chazal* tell us that Shifrah was given this name because she was "*mishaperes es ha'velad*," "she made beautiful the child." Puah received her name as a result of "*poah u'medaberes v'hoga le'velad*," "she called aloud and spoke and murmured to the infant." This does not mean that they were "nicknamed" in accordance with their functions. On the contrary, these names defined their essence. They were Shifrah and Puah precisely because their whole objective in this world was to act with *mesiras nefesh* on behalf of the Jewish children.

Chazal tell us that *Klal Yisrael* were redeemed from Egypt in the merit that they did not change their "names." They came down to Egypt with the Hebrew names they were given, and they left with those same names. What is so unique about the fact that they did not change their names? While it indicates a definite respect for tradition, should this merit their liberation? *Horav Shlomo Yosef Zevin, zl*, explains that a name defines one's essence. Adam *Ha'Rishon* was able to give names to all the animals because he understood the basic qualities and the individual nature of each. Indeed, when Moshe asked Hashem, "When *Klal Yisrael* will ask me what is His Name, (referring to Hashem), what will I say?" Hashem answered, "*Eheyeh asher Eheyeh*." What Moshe was saying was, "How can I give them Your Name?" A name describes one's essence. How does one describe Hashem's essence? It is far beyond the scope of mankind. We only know Hashem's *metzius*, the existence of Hashem is a reality." Hashem responded, "I will be what I will be." Hashem will always be there. His *metzius*, existence, is a reality that is eternal.

Klal Yisrael did not alter their names. Their essential character, their Jewish essence, did not change. While they might have become acculturized to the Egyptian lifestyle and they certainly picked up some of the influence, their *Yiddishe neshamah*, their *atzmius*, did not change. They might have acted like Egyptians in many ways - but in character and belief they remained Jews.

They did not change their names.