

**"And he (Moshe) cast it upon the ground and it became a serpent and Moshe fled from it. And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Send forth your hand and grasp its tail', and he sent forth his hand and grasped it and it became a staff in his palm." (4:3,4)**

*Horav Avigdor Miller, Shlita*, offers a profound homiletic rendering of the dialogue between Hashem and Moshe concerning the miraculous transformation of the staff to a serpent. Moshe was reluctant to accept leadership because he feared he would fall prey to the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, of pride and glory-seeking. This is symbolized by the serpent to which the staff was transformed. From the genesis of man, the serpent has been the symbol of evil. Instead, Hashem desired to instruct Moshe that failure to accept leadership in areas of Jewish concern, areas of virtue, benevolence and kindness to others, is in itself a form of evil. Hashem, therefore, implored Moshe to take the "serpent" in his hand. He urged him not to fear the evil of vainglory, but rather to accept it and use it for the purpose of leadership. Indeed, to refuse the position which would help *Bnei Yisrael* was in itself a deference to the *yetzer hara*. The serpent of arrogance and pride is not as threatening as the serpent of fleeing from the responsibilities of leadership when one is capable.