

But Hashem did not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see, or ears to hear, until this day. (29:3)

Moshe began his final charge to *Klal Yisrael* by putting the experiences of their forty years in the wilderness into perspective. The commentators offer a number of explanations for "*hayom hazeh*," "this day" to which Moshe is referring. Simply, in the forty years of miraculous survival, *Klal Yisrael* were exposed to the highest degree of spiritual revelation; they were nurtured and taught by the greatest teachers. *Klal Yisrael* could now fully appreciate the overwhelming debt of gratitude they owed to Hashem. They were finally ready to really serve Him. He could now expect more from them.

Rashi suggests another analysis. On the day that Moshe gave the *Sefer Torah* to *Bnei Levi*, the rest of *Klal Yisrael* protested to Moshe, "We were also at Har Sinai and we also accepted the Torah. Why do you grant the members of your tribe primacy to receive the Torah? The Torah was not given only to you. It was given to all of us!" When Moshe heard these words, he was filled with joy knowing that *Klal Yisrael* was prepared to fight for the Torah. He said, "Today I have come to the realization that you cling and have a deep desire to serve Hashem."

Rashi's statement is incredible. After forty long years, which included some of the most miraculous occurrences of *Klal Yisrael's* history, Moshe was still not sure of their conviction. The fact that their complaining set them apart and convinced Moshe of their love and desire to serve Hashem, is truly enigmatic. If we were to take into consideration the essence of their protest, we may question Moshe. Was their complaint valid? Is there any basis for thinking that the Torah would have been handed to *Bnei Levi* instead of all *Klal Yisrael*? Should such a protest have proven to Moshe that their commitment was real, that their devotion was unstinting?

Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, Shlita, observes that when one is about to judge the quality of commitment of an individual or a community, the level of devotion and integrity, he should not base his judgment upon the way they have responded during sublime moments of ascendancy. In addition, one's moral profile should not be characterized by his demeanor during moments of weakness, since most often the real person is not manifest in these circumstances. One idea should be taken into consideration: During those moments of weakness, when he "loses it," what is the focus of his activities? How does he speak? What is his demeanor? Is the focus of his endeavor of a sublime nature? Indeed, a person's real essence can be determined during his display of weakness, only if we can perceive beyond his obvious signs of weakness. In the moments when joy is missing, when a person's weakness is evident, the real person is manifest.

Klal Yisrael experienced many remarkable spiritual milestones during which they exhibited sublime character traits. Was that really their essence? Were they inclined to fight for their portion in Torah, even if at times their protest did not reflect a well-considered argument? When Moshe saw that they would never defer their *chalek* in the Torah to anyone, when he saw that they would

protest even, if the protest was not totally logical, he knew they had matured. Today they demonstrated their essence - *Torah* was an integral part of each of them.