

## "He sent an emissary and took us out of Egypt." (20:16)

*Rashi* comments that Moshe used the word "Itkn" -- which also means angel -- because the prophets are referred to as angels. It seems slightly out of character for Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the "*anav mikol adam*," the paragon of humility, to chose a word that alludes to spiritual superiority.

**Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, zl**, cites a response from his father-in-law, **Horav Eliezer Gordon, zl**. *Horav* Gordon recounts an incident in which a famous *gaon*, one of the most prominent *rabbanim* in Vilna, met a villager driving a wagon that was being pulled by a horse and a cow simultaneously. When the *rav* saw this blatant sin, he took the ignorant man to task. "Don't you know that it is prohibited to harness together two animals of different species?" the *rav* asked. The man added *chutzpah* to his ignorance by totally ignoring the *rav* - even after he had reproved him several times. When the *rav* realized that patience was no longer a virtue, he screamed at him in exasperation, "Do you know who I am? I am one of the foremost *rabbanim* in Vilna. My reputation is spread far and wide. As soon as I return to Vilna, I will convene my *bais din* and issue a *cherem*, excommunication, against you." When the man heard such strong words emanating from such a distinguished *rav*, he recanted his attitude and immediately unharnessed the animals from the wagon.

We derive from this incident that, at times, the most humble individual must take a stand -- and act in a somewhat pretentious manner -- in order to make his point clear. Regrettably, people do not simply respond to the merit of a statement, but rather to the one who makes the declaration. When Moshe *Rabbeinu* spoke to the king of Edom, he realized that this man was so obtuse and vain that he would only listen to a distinguished individual. Thus, Moshe compared himself to an angel of the Almighty in order to elicit a positive reaction from the king of Edom.