

"And Moshe thought, I will turn aside now and look at this great sight." (3:3)

The *Midrash* lauds Moshe's actions, as he "exerted" himself to see the wondrous sight. R' Yochanon says that Moshe took three steps out of his way, while Reish Lakish says that he turned his head to gaze at the remarkable burning bush. We can glean a deeper understanding of Moshe's action as stated by the *Midrash*. After all, Moshe did not seem to perform any type of exceptional deed that would warrant Hashem's revelation as a reward. *Horav Eliyahu Dessler, z.l.*, cites the *Alter M'Kelm* who posits that it was indeed Moshe's "simple" action that made him worthy of such monumental reward.

Man is not expected to complete the entire endeavor. All that is demanded of him is that initial effort, the desire to perform for Hashem. The rest will be realized through Hashem's assistance. In the *Midrash Shir Ha'Shirim*, Chazal state: "*Hashem says, 'Open for Me an opening the size of the eye of a needle and I will open for you entrances through which wagons may enter.'*" The Almighty waits for us to initiate the relationship, to take that first step. As soon as we demonstrate our willingness to grow spiritually, as soon as we concretize our aspirations in any small measure, we have endeavored to move nearer to Hashem. We have thereby created a tiny entrance. Hashem will complete the task.

Horav Dessler infers this idea from two more occurrences in our *parsha*. Moshe thrust his staff to the ground and suddenly it transformed into a serpent. Hashem thereupon told Moshe to grab hold of the serpent's tail, and instantly it turned back into a staff. Was it necessary for Moshe to grab hold of the serpent in order for the miraculous transformation to occur? No! It could have happened without Moshe's participation, but unless man makes some effort, unless we endeavor however slightly, we have no right to demand or expect a miracle.

In the next scenario, we find that Pharaoh's daughter noticed an infant in a basket from afar. She stretched out her hand to reach for the child and, behold, her arm became elongated, so that it could miraculously reach the child. She did her part by stretching out her hand. She performed the *hishtadlus*, endeavor. Hashem accomplished the rest.

These three narratives have one concept in common. The individual performed his endeavor creating but a tiny hole, the size of the eye of a needle. This action catalyzed Hashem's response, reinforcing the strength of man's act. In the case of the burning bush, Moshe turned aside as an afterthought. In the second instance Moshe fulfilled Hashem's command and performed what seemed to be an insignificant act. There are circumstances, however, as we note in the third situation, in which a person's overwhelming yearning to do something creates that tiny *pesach*, entranceway, which stimulates Hashem's response.

Horav Leib Chasman, z.l., offers a profound parable which clearly demonstrates to us the meaning

of *"open up for Me a hole the size of a needle."* A man, famished out of his mind, is searching around for food or drink. He stumbles from place to place, as he gets weaker and weaker. Literally, his life is ebbing away. Suddenly, he sees a large beautiful building before him. As he peers through the windows, he notices tables made of gold and silver bedecked with the finest cloths. Upon these tables lay every delicacy imaginable, succulent meats and the finest wines, just waiting for someone to enter and partake. As he stands there gaping at the spectacle, his overwhelming hunger becomes stronger as his body gets weaker. He searches for keys to unlock the one door that stands between him and life. He somehow must get through this barrier. Searching extensively, he locates a ring of keys. After trying every key to no avail, he gives up in frustration. There is, however, one simple solution that can still save him. If he files down the key slightly, so that it will pass through the drums of the lock similar to a passkey, he will succeed in opening the door. He has one minor problem -- he does not have a file! Imagine, a small adjustment of the key stands between this man's life and his death.

This is the story of life. We must enter through the door to enjoy the spiritual reward that awaits us. All we need is to prepare the key so that we can enter. Unlike the unfortunate person in our parable, we **have** the small file that can assist us in shaping the key. That file is called initiative. If we take the first step, Hashem will do the rest. As we are taught, *"One who comes/takes the initiative to purify himself, he is assisted by Hashem."*