

G-d spoke to Moshe and said to him, “I am Hashem.” (6:2)

Rashi observes that Hashem spoke to Moshe *Rabbeinu* using words of rebuke for speaking harshly when he said, “Why have You harmed this people?” In the previous *parsha*, we note Moshe speaking to Hashem following Moshe’s return from his first meeting with Pharaoh. The Egyptian ruler did not take kindly to being told to free the Jews. He took umbrage to Moshe’s and Aharon’s demands. Not only did he not free the Jews, he added to their workload. Our quintessential leader could not understand why Hashem sent him to Pharaoh, which, in effect, had a negative effect. He expressed his feelings. The above *pasuk* which represents Hashem’s response to Moshe refers to Hashem as *Elokim*, a Name reserved for *Din*, the Attribute of Strict Justice. Hashem is used for the *Middah*, Attribute, of *Rachamim*, Mercy. This is why *Rashi* notes that Hashem was reproving Moshe. It is, however, not clear exactly what it was that made Hashem upset with Moshe.

Horav Nissan Alpert, zl, offers a novel explanation based on the principles and responsibilities of leadership. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was two people in one. He was Moshe, the *manhig Yisrael*, leader of the Jewish People, and Moshe, the private citizen, member of the Jewish People. A leader represents the one who initiates his leadership position – which, in this case, was Hashem. The Almighty designated Moshe as *Klal Yisrael*’s leader. They are Hashem’s nation, His sheep. Moshe is their designated shepherd, appointed by Hashem, their G-d. In his role as leader, Moshe represents Hashem. Thus, it is prohibited for him to express himself negatively. He appears to be questioning Hashem. Moshe, the leader, may not question the One Who is sending him on his mission. Moshe the citizen may ask. He may express his feelings, concerning the people’s plight. He is welling over with pain. How can he not speak up? He is the same Moshe from two vantage points: Hashem’s representative; a member of the nation.

Rashi explains the term *Ani Hashem: neeman l’shalem s’char*, “I am faithful to pay a reward to those who walk before Me.” *Va’yomer eilav*, “Hashem spoke to him” – to Moshe, the citizen, to Moshe who saw his people drowning in sorrow, afflicted with pain and torment: Hashem spoke to the Moshe who cried out for his brothers in pain. *Ani Hashem*, the Merciful Father understands the feelings that are coursing through you. But, in your role as a private individual, of course it is My desire that you care, show feeling for your brothers. But, now you are Moshe the leader of the Jewish People, you are acting in Hashem’s stead, and are thus permitted to act only within the specific parameters that Hashem has given.

As Hashem’s representative, Moshe may do only what he is told. He may not add, nor subtract. He adheres to the script prepared for him by Hashem. A leader who acts as Hashem’s agent is no more and no less than an agent who follows his orders. Self-expression is for the private citizen, not the public leader.

Spiritual leadership does not come easy. The responsibility is enormous, with failure often meaning that a *neshamah*, soul, is “lost” or “delayed” from blossoming. One rarely receives credit for his

efforts, since gratitude is an elusive commodity. Some people would rather deny their personal development than offer gratitude to the one who enabled them to achieve their milestone.

I think that success or failure may be measured according to the leader's goals. As a leader, does he direct or develop? One who directs obviously asks for a high success rate, because if his subject does not follow him to a "T" he has failed. Success becomes an "all" or "nothing" measure. A leader who develops views every positive change in his subject as another rung on the ladder of success. How does a leader imbue his followers with the ability to listen to him, to follow him through thick and thin?

Rav Alpert offers a solution to this query with support from our *parsha*. "Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding *Bnei Yisrael* and regarding Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to take *Bnei Yisrael* out of the land of Egypt" (Ibid. 6:13). What is Hashem telling Moshe and Aharon? The **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh** explains that Hashem is responding to Moshe's concerns that neither the *Bnei Yisrael* nor Pharaoh will listen to what he has to say. Hashem's response was: "Moshe, do not worry. I have appointed you to be their ruler."

This response begs elucidation. How does this address Moshe's concerns? Will Moshe's announcement that he was appointed by Hashem to be their leader suddenly guarantee that they will all line up and accept his authority? Are mere words sufficient to rouse a nation – who heretofore had not been subjected to true leadership – to suddenly accept Moshe? I think Moshe would have to provide some incredible supernatural display of his spiritual prowess to ensure their accepting his authority over them.

Furthermore, if Hashem's goal was for the people to listen to Moshe and Aharon and accede to their authority, why did He not speak to the people, rather than command Moshe and Aharon to speak to them? Surely, Hashem's commanding *Klal Yisrael* directly would have had greater efficacy than if it came through Moshe.

Rav Alpert compares this to the well-known anecdotal vignette of a *chasid* who one day announced to his *Rebbe* that the previous night he had a dream that he – the *chasid* – would become the next *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe* pondered the statement for a moment and said, "Well, as long as you are the only one having this dream, it will not get you very far. Had it been my *chassidim* who had the dream, rather than yourself, you would be in business. Otherwise, I think you will not get very far in ensuring your acceptance by the *chassidim*."

Rav Alpert explains that, in effect, Hashem was teaching Moshe a primary lesson in leadership. In order for the people to listen, it will be up to Moshe to make himself a king over them. To the extent that he will be successful in impressing them with his position, to that degree they will listen.

How does Moshe achieve this? The next *pasuk*, 6:14, continues by citing the Jewish nation's pedigree: "These were the heads of their fathers' houses." *Klal Yisrael* descended from the Avos,

Patriarchs. The heart and soul of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Yaakov resides deep within the recesses of their hearts. The royal DNA of the Patriarchs courses through their psyche. They are royalty, kings – the sons of kings, *maaminim*, believers, the sons of believers! Faith runs in their veins.

Moshe will be able to penetrate their hearts and minds once he demonstrates to them that they are not like everyone else. They are royalty! When the Jews are taught to believe in themselves, they will in turn believe in Moshe. When they believe that they are royalty – Moshe will be their king. Once the leader has successfully implanted in the minds of his followers that they are special – they will then listen to him – as was the case with Moshe *Rabbeinu*.