

## But they did not listen to Moshe, because of shortness of breath and hard work... “Behold Bnei Yisrael have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me? And I have sealed lips!” (6:9,12)

*Rashi* observes that Moshe *Rabbeinu's* response to Hashem is considered one of the ten *kal v'chomer* arguments to be found in the Torah. *Kal v'chomer* translated literally means, “light and weighty.” This refers to the extrapolation from a minor premise to a major one. Thus, Moshe argues, “Behold the Jews (who would want any opportunity to leave) did not listen to me, so how can You expect Pharaoh to listen?” The commentators question this *kal v'chomer*, since the Torah had already given a reason for the refusal of the people to listen. They had already given up. The persecution had taken its toll on their emotions. They were short of breath and overworked. The bondage had already gone too far; the people had lost hope.

Additionally, the commentators are troubled by Moshe's extreme reluctance to go to Egypt to redeem *Bnei Yisrael*. One does not say “no” to Hashem. This is especially true of the *adon ha'Neviim*, master of Prophets, the one about whom Hashem attests, “In My entire house, he is the trusted one. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him, in a clear vision and not in riddles” (*Bamidbar* 12:7). Such greatness; such trust; yet this very same Moshe said “no” to Hashem!

Furthermore, earlier we find Moshe telling Hashem, *Lo ish devarim anochi*, “I am not a man of words, not since yesterday, nor since the day before yesterday, nor since You first spoke to Your servant (4:10).” Where do we find that Hashem had previously spoken to Moshe?

Last, why is it that when Hashem sent Moshe to redeem the Jewish People, Moshe was reluctant to accept the mission; yet, when he was sent to accept the Torah, he did not display any of his earlier humility. He did not say, “Who am I (that I should go to Pharaoh)?” (*Shemos* 3:11).

In his inimitable manner, **Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita**, explains this with a *yesod*, *Kabbalistic* principle, rendered by the *Rema m'Panu*. When Hashem created Adam *HaRishon*, Primordial Man, He created him with two significant organs: *kaneh*, trachea/windpipe; and *veshet*, food pipe/esophagus. The function of the trachea is to produce speech, allowing for thought to be expressed verbally: *V'dbarta bam*, “And you shall speak in them”; *Bam yeish lecha reshus l'daber v'lo bidevarim achairim*, “In them you have permission to speak, but not in other things” (*Yoma* 19b). This teaches us that speech was granted to us for the purpose of Torah study or any act which leads up to Torah study. The function of the esophagus is to ingest food and beverage into the body in order to sustain the person.

As soon as Hashem created man, He immediately gave him various *mitzvos*, both positive and prohibitive, which are related to the *veshet*, esophagus. Adam was allowed to eat from a certain

tree and prohibited from eating from another tree. Since Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, Tree of Knowledge, he blemished the *veshet*, creating a *klipah*, “outer shell” which is the esoteric symbol of an evil covering preventing the flow of good from reaching its destination. His trachea was not affected when he ate of the forbidden fruit. Nonetheless, when he blamed Chavah, including Hashem as her Creator in the equation, he was *kafar b'tovah*, acted ungraciously, manifesting a lack of *hakoras hatov*, gratitude; in so doing, he blemished the trachea which allows speech. Thus, Adam's *koach ha'dibbur*, ability to speak, became *nifgam*, tainted. The *neshamah*, soul, of Adam *HaRishon* included within it the source of every *neshamah* to be created thereafter. Different parts of his body, every organ, membrane, limb – even his hair- all provided a source from which every later *neshamah* would be derived.

The **Rema M'Panu** posits that the *shoresh*, source, of Moshe's *neshamah* was Adam's windpipe. Realizing that one of his primary organs had already been compromised, Moshe took extreme care to protect the other one, his *veshet*, food pipe, from ingesting any food that was not absolutely spiritually impeccable. This is what Hashem alluded to when He said, “In My entire house, he is the trusted one.” Moshe viewed anything inappropriate as representing the sin of eating of the *Eitz HaDaas*. Thus, Moshe was the perfect individual through whom to channel the Heavenly Bread, *Manna*, to the Jewish nation in the desert. When Moshe ascended *Har Sinai* and remained there for forty days and nights, he ate no tangible food, subsisting solely on the *ziv haShechinah*, shine of the Divine Presence. Furthermore, since the “Moshe aspect” of Adam's *neshamah* had not listened to Chavah, and, thus, did not eat of the Tree of Knowledge, he was permitted to separate from his wife, Tziporah, in preparation for the Giving of the Torah. Having led a perfect life, he was able and permitted to continue doing so.

Nonetheless, Moshe's ability to speak was slightly flawed, since, as part of Adam *HaRishon*, he did not prevent the other *neshamos* included therein to eat of the *Eitz HaDaas*. Because he did not prevent the sin from occurring, he was compelled to flee to Midyan, parallel to the exile imposed on one who kills unintentionally. When Pharaoh's executioner was about to kill Moshe by severing his neck, he was saved, his neck turning into stone. Despite the fact that sound emanates through the neck, since it remained pure when “he” did not eat from the *Eitz HaDaas*, he was protected from death. Understandably, much more can be said and explained as a result of this incredibly novel principle, but I will instead return to respond to our earlier question.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* viewed his mission to teach Torah to *Klal Yisrael* as a form of penance for not having screamed out to prevent the sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*. Speaking *divrei Torah*, words of Torah, would correct his original spiritual mishap. Thus, prior to the Giving of the Torah, Moshe had difficulty speaking. It was his way of repairing the spiritual flaw created by his silence during the sin of the *Eitz HaDaas*. When he gave *Klal Yisrael* the Torah, Moshe's “tongue” was healed.

As we prepare to address the previous difficulties in explaining Moshe's reluctance to go to Egypt, *Rav Friedman* cites the **Arizal** who illuminates for us an entirely new perspective for

understanding *galus Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exile. In his *Shaar HaPesukim, Parashas Shemos*, the *Arizal* explains that all of the *neshamos* who experienced the terrible ordeal in Egypt had been originally components of Adam *HaRishon's* *neshamah* which ate of the *Eitz HaDaas*. Thus, they were relegated to undergo various *gilgulim*, transmigrations of the soul, during which the taint on their *neshamos* would be expunged.

Their first sojourn into this world was in the *neshamos* of the generation of the Flood. The taint was too deeply imbedded in them, causing them to sin and be forced to leave this world during the Flood. The *Dor Haflagah*, Generation of the Dispersal, was their next chance. They did not fare very well there, so they were sent to Sodom. We all know what happened there. Their last chance was *galus Mitzrayim*. Two hundred and ten years of brutal persecution took its toll on them, and they cleaned their slate, so to speak. Additionally, through the various persecutions, they were able to atone for the sins which led to the Flood and Dispersal. They were once again punished through the medium of water when their male children were being flung into the Nile. The bricks and pyramids which they built atoned for the bricks which comprised the Tower of Bavel. Moshe redeemed them from Egypt, since his *neshamah* had never sinned in *Gan Eden*. Moshe was compared to all of *Klal Yisrael*, who, after four exiles, was now ready to receive the Torah.

*Rav* Friedman now explains Moshe's refusal to lead the Jews out of Egypt. While it is true that his *neshamah* had not participated in Adam's sin, he blamed himself for not protesting, for not "opening his mouth" to stop the sin from taking place. Thus, he said to Hashem, "I was not an *ish devarim*, person who speaks (takes a stand) from "way back," which is a reference to *Gan Eden*. "How could I be the one to serve as *Klal Yisrael's* leader? I am myself far from perfect!"

Hashem responded to Moshe that, by teaching Torah to *Klal Yisrael*, all would be cleansed; all would be forgiven. We now understand the profound meaning of the *pasuk V'ha'ish Moshe anav mikol ha'adam*, "And the man Moshe was more humble than any man" (*Bamidbar* 12:3). Moshe considered himself to be lower than any component of Adam *HaRishon*, since he did not speak up and prevent the sin from occurring. So much more can be said based upon this principle. I have selected this *dvar Torah* to demonstrate the many profundities of the Torah which elude us and which provide so much meaning in understanding the questions which challenge us throughout life.