

"And He (Hashem) called unto Moshe." (1:1)

The *Midrash* views Hashem's call to Moshe as a command to continue his leadership over *Klal Yisrael*. In all humility, Moshe *Rabbeinu* felt his tenure as leader should cease because his mission had been completed. The *Midrash* cites a *pasuk* which is interpreted by *Chazal* as alluding to three distinct groups of individuals who serve Hashem. Let us focus on the *pasuk* and its applications.

David Ha'Melech writes in *Sefer Tehillim*, 103:20, "Bless Hashem, O' His angels, the strong warriors who do His bidding, to obey the voice of His word." The divergent opinions in *Chazal* are in understanding the term, "*His angels, the strong warriors.*" To whom is the *pasuk* referring? The first opinion is that the *pasuk* is alluding to Moshe and Aharon who were called "*malachim*," messengers. They -- and all other dedicated leaders like them who assume their calling out of a sense of humility and devotion to Hashem's word -- are truly, "strong warriors." To persevere in the face of strong opposition, to endure under pressure, to look contention in the eye and remain firm, flexible but unyielding, takes nobility, strength, and above all, commitment. Although the *Midrash* mentions Moshe and Aharon, all of *Klal Yisrael's* leadership share this trait.

The next opinion is that of *Rav Acha* who contends that the term, "strong warriors," does not refer to leadership as a whole. He acknowledges that many individual leaders demonstrate unparalleled and unquestionable devotion. There are, however, many whose leadership goals are stimulated by a quest for self-aggrandizement. While we should pay tribute to individual leaders, the entire class is not necessarily worthy of such acclaim. *Rav Acha* posits that *Klal Yisrael* as a unit is worthy of this honor. They have faithfully followed Hashem throughout their tumultuous history. Their adherence to *Torah* and *mitzvos* has been exemplary. They have followed their spiritual leaders unstintingly. Without questioning the motives of their *rabbeim*, they have deferred to whatever has been demanded of them.

Rav Yitzchak bar Nafcha concurs with *Rav Acha*, demanding blind, unequivocal faith in the Almighty. This type of faith in a human leader, however, is improper. To follow Hashem with a commitment of "*Naase V'Nishma*," "*We will do and we will hear*," is crucial. To have the same devotion towards a human being, regardless of his scholarship and virtue, is unacceptable and destructive. Consequently, *Rav Yitzchak* concludes that "strong warriors" is a reference to those who observe *Shmittah*, the Sabbatical year. During this year, the Jewish landowner must stand idly by while his land and crops become public property. What he always thought was his, he now realizes really belongs to Hashem. His self-restraint in accepting Hashem's mandate earns him the accolade of "strong warrior."