

Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding Bnei Yisrael and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. (6:13)

Easier said than done. Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon to take the Jews out of Egyptian bondage. Two problems surfaced: Pharaoh has to agree, and the Jews have to want to -- and believe that they actually can -- leave. Moshe *Rabbeinu* had earlier voiced his concerns, but Hashem told him not to worry. The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* explains how this played out. Hashem told Moshe, "I have appointed you to be their ruler." That is wonderful. Who says that the nation that had been enslaved body and soul, for 210 years, was prepared to accept Moshe's leadership? How did Hashem allay Moshe's concern? How could Moshe convey to the people that he was their new ruler in a way that would ensure their acceptance of him? Words have very little power (unless they are humiliating someone). How could Moshe's mere words of introduction as their new leader cement a relationship of respect that they would follow? Perhaps, had Moshe been imbued with a heavy dose of supernatural powers, it might have had greater impact.

Furthermore, if Hashem had wanted the people to accept Moshe and Aharon as their leaders, should He not have conveyed this message directly to the people-- not simply to Moshe and Aharon? *Horav Nissan Alpert, zl*, compares this to the well-known story of the *chassid* who told his *Rebbe* that he had just received a Heavenly Revelation via a dream that he (the *chassid*) was to become the next *Rebbe*. The holy *Rebbe* replied, "As long as the only one having this dream is you, it will not receive much positive response. Had it been the *chassidim* who had this dream, rather than just yourself, you might be in a more acceptable position." In other words, it is not enough that one believes that he should be the leader. His people must believe it, if he is to be accepted. A leader who is not on the same page as his followers is not much of a leader -- since no one is following him. What is meant by Hashem's "assurance" to Moshe that He has appointed him to be *Klal Yisrael's* ruler?

Rav Alpert explains that Hashem imparted an important lesson in leadership (in reality, in education) to Moshe. In order for the people to listen to Moshe, it was vital that Moshe make himself into a king. To the extent that Moshe succeeded in the presentation and implementation of this role -- to that degree would the people listen. In other words, people look up to a leader, but the leader must act like a leader and be worthy of his leadership role.

How was this transformation to occur? How did Moshe, the holy person who previously had been an individual, become *Klal Yisrael's* ruler? First and foremost, a slave does not understand the concept of royalty. Someone who descends from monarchy, who has royalty in his blood, has a greater ability to appreciate the significance of the power and leadership ability that a king manifests. Aristocracy understands aristocracy.

Having said this, we understand the approach that Moshe had to take in order to inspire the people

to listen to him. If we look at the *pesukim* that follow, the Torah records the heads of the Jewish households and their lineage. *Klal Yisrael* was not a nation comprised of ordinary slaves. They were descendants of the Patriarchs. The heart and soul of the *Avos* rests squarely within the DNA of each and every Jew. We are royalty! The sons of kings, the descendants of believers, we are different. It was up to Moshe to teach the nation its lineage, its history. He had to teach them to believe in themselves, to realize that they were *bnei melachim*, sons of kings. Once they recognized their own royal heritage, they could acknowledge Moshe as the ruler of the nation.

The student of true Jewish history is taught a perspective on the panorama of events through the lens of Torah, which will infuse him with a sense of pride in our heritage. Without such a perspective, he ends up focusing on the events themselves, rather than the lessons that they impart. It has been specifically this narrow sweep of events that has given rise to the revisionist approach to history, evinced by the secularists who pick apart events to suit their spiritually distorted fancy. Indeed, the secular streams that have infected Judaism have robbed the unknowing Jew of his/her pride in their heritage.

The secular historian, whose bias against traditional and spiritual leadership is quite evident, has, over time, spawned a school of history that totally ignores G-d's "involvement." We study "events," "people," "issues," but never the guiding Hand of the Creator in catalyzing these events. We refuse to "connect the dots" for fear of having to acknowledge the clear fact that it did not just "all happen." There is purpose, mission and destiny in everything and everyone. To ignore this verity is selfishly to undermine history and deceive oneself.

When we study our history, we develop a sense of pride in our heritage. The ability to connect to the glorious culture that preceded us is invaluable. Conversely, our inability to relate to history, to look back with deep pride, to place people in their correct time frame and perspective, engenders within us a certain naiveté and outlook that is counter-productive to living a full life according to Torah. Torah gives us a total blueprint from where we hail, so that we can embrace that blueprint with confidence. Thus, the false accusations leveled against us by our enemies will not sway us, nor will we be compelled to live a life of apologetic acquiescence. This is what happened to our secular co-religionists. Their break with the past created a distortion in their self-esteem and severed their identity with the historical continuum of our nation. Tragedy and revival have always been aspects of our historical continuum. We look forward with great anticipation to that glorious day when we will no longer suffer tragedy, when challenges and adversity will be a thing of the past, when revival will be our constant motif and everlasting companion.

In order for Moshe *Rabbeinu* to succeed as ruler over the nation, he had to explain to the people who they were. When the people would be able to perceive themselves as royalty, then they could respect Moshe as king. When a teacher or *rebbe* enters the classroom, he is immediately on a stage. Long gone are the days when a teacher's presence alone demanded respect – from students as well as their parents. Today, a *rebbe* or teacher receives respect the hard way – by earning it. I was reading a thesis by a highly acclaimed motivational educator who posits that one

of the best ways to earn a student's respect is by being the kind of person your students want to become. Another perspective is that, if your students do not want to replicate your success, then you really do not need to be there. We promote success by first modeling it. Our students should want what we possess. (This does not mean material success. I refer to *middos tovos*, character refinement. This obviously applies to parents as well.)

When a student sizes up a teacher, he looks at the outward presentation of his self – how he walks, dresses, acts, speaks, responds. The student who learns best is the one who says, "I want that. I want to be like him/her."

How we act makes the difference in how we ultimately become accepted. If we do not have "it," it will be very difficult to impart "it." A student of the *Chasam Sofer* came to him requesting *semichah*, rabbinical ordination. The *Chasam Sofer* noticed that when he entered the room, he did not kiss the *mezuzah*. The sage reasoned that, due to his nervousness in anticipation of the upcoming examination, he had forgotten to kiss the *mezuzah*. The *Chasam Sofer* told him to return the next day. He wanted to see if he would kiss the *mezuzah* upon his return.

On the next day, the student failed to kiss the *mezuzah*. This already served as sufficient reason for the *Chasam Sofer* to disqualify him from the rabbinate. Simply, a *rav* must instill *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, in his congregation. If he has a deficiency, the people will eventually notice it, precluding his ability to lead. When the people lack the respect they should have for their leader, he has lost his ability to lead.