

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"o, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



Tetzaveh תצוה תש"פ • Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos • גלידן 78

Why Moshe Was Unable to Understand Certain Elements Found Within the Torah

לְכָל כְּלֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן בְּכָל עֲבֹדָתוֹ וְכָל יְתָדָיו וְכָל יְתֹדֹת הַחֹצֵי נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֵתָהּ תְצַוֶּה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שִׁמֹן זֵית זָךְ כֶּתִית לְמֵאוֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד (כו, יט-כ)

...all its pegs and all the pegs of the Courtyard shall be of copper. And you shall command the Children of Israel... [The first, being the final words of the previous Parsha, Terumah, while the second, being the first words of the current Parsha, Tetzaveh].

Let us attempt to understand the juxtaposition of the last word of the previous Parsha, 'נחשת', and the opening of the present Parsha with the words 'ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל'.



The word נחשת is an acronym of the following four words, שקלים, שְׁקֵלִים, - Flame, Month, Shekalim and To be seen. These words that are referred to in this acronym allude to the three Mitzvos that Moshe Rabainu had a difficult time understanding until he saw their prototype. נר - נגמ' מנחות כט ע"א וירושלמי שקלים פ"א ה"ד. flame, refers to the Menorah's shape and design. חודש - month, refers to the size of the new moon that is needed for the High Court to be able to sanctify the Rosh Chodesh. שקל - Shekel, refers to the exact weight of the half-Shekel that is needed to fulfill the Mitzvah of 'Machatzis Hashekel'.

It would seem that the difficulty that Moshe had in understanding these three specific Mitzvos, was not merely due to the complexity in their physical sense, for there are many areas in the Torah that are much more complex. Rather, each one of these Mitzvos had a particular element within itself, which was a result of Moshe being destined to die in the desert and not enter the Land of Israel. At the time that Moshe received the Torah, and was learning all the Mitzvos and their associated elements, he was not yet aware that he was to die in the desert, and thus when he came across these three particular Mitzvos, he was puzzled and could not comprehend those specific elements, as we shall further explain.

'Rosh Chodesh' - The Mitzvah is to sanctify the new moon at the beginning of every lunar month. The moon waning at the end of every month and then waxing anew at the beginning of every month corresponds to the Jewish people, who likewise, have their time of grandeur and greatness and yet also go through phases of minimalism and paucity. Earlier sources teach us, that had Moshe

been the one to bring the Jews into the Land of Israel, the Temple would never have been destroyed and the Jews would not have gone into exile, rather, the Jews would always have remained in their grandeur state. Thus, the moon too, would never diminish in size, but would always remain in its full state. When Hashem told Moshe about 'Rosh Chodesh', Moshe realized that the moon would be waning and waxing, which was something that he could not understand, as he thought that he would be taking the Jews into Israel, and thus the moon would always be in its complete splendor.

'Menorah' - The Mitzvah was to make a Menorah that has seven branches, which would weaken the power of the seven nations found within the boundaries of Israel. Moshe knew that once they enter Israel, they will weaken the power of all seventy nations and, accordingly, would need to construct ten Menorahs, as we indeed find Shlomo Hamelech constructing that many Menorahs when building the Temple many years later. Moshe, who at that time thought that he will be entering Israel, could not understand why he was charged with constructing only one Menorah.

'Shekel' - The word 'שקל' [when calculated through the numerical system called א"ת ב"ש in which the letters שק"ל match up to the letters בד"כ] has the numerical value of twenty six, which corresponds to the numerical value of the Holy Name of Hashem. Here too, Moshe knew that if he was to enter Israel together with the Jews, the Temple would never be destroyed, which would be a symbol of Hashem's "stature" being "complete". He therefore could not understand why the Mitzvah was to take only half a shekel, which would represent, so to speak, an "incomplete stature".



The Torah begins our Parsha by saying; ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל - And you shall command the Children of Israel, keeping Moshe's name distinctly absent. This indicates that the day will come when Moshe, too, will remain absent from the Children of Israel, as he will die in the desert and the Jews will go up to Israel without him. Because this very fact that Moshe will not enter the Land of Israel, is what was behind all those elements that Moshe was unable to understand, we can understand the connection between those matters that were unclear to Moshe and were hinted to in the word נחשת at the very end of last week's Parsha, to the fact that Moshe would die in the desert which is hinted to in the very beginning of this week's Parsha.

What Truly Distressed Moshe When He Heard That Aharon Was to Merit the Priesthood

וְאַתָּה הִקְרַב אֵלַיךְ אֶת אַהֲרֹן אֶחָיִךְ וְאֶת כְּנָיו אִתּוֹ מִתּוֹךְ כְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכַהֵנוּ לִי וְכוּ' (תצוה כ"ח א')

Now you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Children of Israel, so that he shall be a Kohen to Me...

The Midrash (שמ"ד ל"ז ד') relates the following dialogue which took place between Hashem and Moshe at the time that Hashem told Moshe to bring up Aharon and his children to become Kohanim. ואתה הקרב אליך וכו'. כשאמר הקב"ה למשה, ואתה הקרב אליך, הרע לו, אמר לו, 'And you, bring near to yourself...' When Hashem said to Moshe, "Now you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother", it distressed him. But Hashem said to him, "I had the Torah and I gave it to you".

This Midrash seems difficult to understand. Firstly, can it be that Moshe, about whom Hashem Himself testified (במדבר י"ב ג') that he was עניו מאד - exceedingly humble, would become distressed due to jealousy of his brother Aharon? And secondly, how is the fact that Hashem gave the Torah to Moshe a reply to Moshe's distress?

The Gemara in Zevachim (קב ע"א) tells us the following. When Hashem summoned Moshe at the burning bush to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, Moshe repeatedly begged to be relieved of the mission, until Hashem became angry with him. The Passuk then says, 'The anger of Hashem burned against Moshe'. R' Yehoshua ben Korchah says: Every time the 'burning of anger' is mentioned in the Torah, a marked effect is mentioned with regard to it..., in regard to this one, too, a marked effect is mentioned. For it is stated that Hashem said to Moshe, "Is there not Aharon your brother, the Levi"? Now, why did Hashem refer to Aharon as the Levi; was he not a Kohen? From this we infer that what Hashem was actually saying was as follows, "I said that you, Moshe, were to be the Kohen and Aharon was to be the Levi, but now that you have aroused My anger, Aharon shall be the Kohen and you shall be the Levi". This Gemara clearly alludes to the fact that when Moshe continuously begged to be relieved from being the one to redeem the Jews, it was a sin for which he was eventually punished, by losing the Priesthood. How can we comprehend that Moshe would sin so plainly, by not accepting that which Hashem tasked him with?

The answer is that, as always, Moshe's entire intention was to bring about the best for the Jewish People. Here too, it was for their good that Moshe refused to be the one to redeem them, for the Midrash (ילקוט שמעוני רמז תקע"ז) tells us the following. Hashem said, "In the past, you were always redeemed through mortal intervention; in Egypt you were redeemed by Moshe and Aharon, in the days of Sisrah you were redeemed by Devorah and Barak, from the

Midyanim you were redeemed by the Judges, and because your redemption always came about by mortal beings, you were always once again subjugated to others. But in the future, I Myself will redeem you, and that redemption will be everlasting so that you will no longer go into exile to be subjugated to others". Therefore, Moshe refused to be the one to redeem the Jewish people, for he wanted Hashem Himself to redeem them, thereby causing this redemption to be everlasting.

But Hashem did not want that He Himself should redeem the Jews, for after a redemption executed by Hashem Himself, the Jews would never be able to be exiled again, and thus, if they would sin, there would be no choice but to punish them by total annihilation. In order to avoid this, Hashem wanted them to be redeemed by Moshe, so that in the event that they would sin, they would be able to go into exile as punishment for their sins.

When Hashem told Moshe to bring up Aharon and his children to become Kohanim, Moshe understood that he had lost his priesthood as a punishment for begging to be relieved of the task to redeem the Jews. This made him realize that his refusal must have been considered a sin, and it was this realization which brought about Moshe's distress.

To this Hashem replied, "I had the Torah and I gave it to you". What He alluded to was as follows. Up until this point Moshe felt that he was correct in insisting that Hashem Himself redeem the Jews, and it was only when he was punished for that insistence that he realized that he was mistaken. But Hashem was telling Moshe, that the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai through him, Moshe, should have already made it clear that his insistence that Hashem Himself be the redeemer was a mistake.

For originally, all the Jews were to receive the Torah directly from Hashem, and the Midrash (שה"ש רבה א' ט"ז) tells us, that had that been so, the evil inclination would have been entirely uprooted from within them, and would have had no ability to influence them to sin. But when the Jews asked that only Moshe should receive the Torah directly from Hashem, and he in turn should be the one to teach the Torah to the Jewish people, they lost this benefit of being free from the evil inclination, and were thus prone to sin once again.

At that very moment, when only Moshe received the Torah directly from Hashem while the Jews all received it only through him, Moshe should have realized that because there was a possibility for the Jews to sin, there was a need to hold on to the option for the Jews to be able to be exiled once again, as punishment for their sins. Therefore, Moshe was wrong for insisting that Hashem Himself should redeem the Jews, for then there would have been no possibility for the Jews to be exiled, and hence, in the event that they would sin, there would have been no choice but to wipe out the Jews.

זרע שמשון פרשת תצוה אות ג

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