



# דרכים בפרשה

חקת

וירם משה את ידו ויך את הסלע (כ״א)

***And Moshe lifted up his hand and hit the rock (20:11)***

Moshe was told by HaShem to speak to the rock, which would then bring forth water for the entire nation. According to Rashi, the fact that Moshe hit the rock rather than just speaking to it was the sin that prevented Moshe from entering Eretz Yisroel. The Rambam (Shemonah Perakim) argues on this point and explains that the sin of Moshe was that he got angry at Bnai Yisroel calling them rebels, שמעו נא המורים - *listen now rebels!*

The term *eved Hashem* is the appellation by which Moshe Rabbeinu is identified. The definition of an *eved* is one that follows instructions exactly as they are given. There is no room for the true *eved* to deviate even one iota! This can be summed up with a *passuk* in the Torah: “ויעש משה ככל אשר צוה” - *and Moshe did all that HaShem had commanded him, so he did (Shmos 40:16)*”. Accordingly, the meforshim ask: How could Moshe possibly commit such a sin? Wasn't he aware that he was violating a direct command of HaShem?

Furthermore, in HaShem's complaint on Moshe: “יען לא האמנתם בי להקדישני לעיני בני” - *you didn't cause them to believe in me*”, we see that had Moshe spoken to the

rock, causing water to flow forth, this would have been the ultimate level of *kiddush HaShem*, but instead, Moshe brought forth a smaller miracle, thereby squandering a golden opportunity.

When we look at our *gedolim* and the *tzaddikim* of every generation, we are able to clearly see that they can only function through a tremendous level of *siyata dishmaya*. When we see how they split themselves in so many ways, giving a new meaning to the idea of multi-tasking, and then we look at their levels of *tefillah* and their hours of *hasmada*, we are compelled to admit that all this is only possible with HaShem's help. There are countless stories of *tzaddikim* (as recent as Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*) that issued thousands of halachic rulings and were able to say clearly that they were certain that no mistake would come from their *psak halacha* because they had *siyata dishmaya*.

Chazal tell us (Avos 5:18) כל המזכה את הרבים אין חטא בא על ידו וכו' משה זכה וזכה את הרבים, *Whoever causes the community to be meritorious, no sin will come by his hand etc. Moshe was meritorious and caused the community to be*

*meritorious, so the community's merit is attributed to him.*

Seeing how the mishna's quintessential example of someone that has the guarantee of not erring was Moshe Rabbeinu, we must ask how it was possible for Moshe to make this error, i.e. what happened to the *siyata dishmaya*?

One answer given to our question is that his error was the result of getting angry. We find by the *klei midyan, vessels of midyan*, Moshe had forgotten the laws as a result of earlier anger. Anger has all kinds of side effects. We can explain this further by citing the words of the *gemara* (*Shabbos 105b*) that כל הכועס כאילו עובד ע"ז - *one who gets angry, it is as if he is an idol worshipper*, and (*Nedarim 22b*) כל הכועס אפילו שכינה אינה - *the Shechina is of no importance to those that get angry*. Surely, one that displays anger cannot expect to have the Shechina helping him. Moshe of course, was not an angry person, but rather someone who was angry at that specific time, so as a rule he had *siyata dishmaya*, but specifically in this case it was not there for him.

We can offer another answer. If we look at the conversation that Moshe had when he got angry, he says שמעו נא המורים - *listen now rebels!* As the leader of Klal Yisroel, Moshe Rabbeinu always had protection. Once he called them “*morim*”, speaking badly about them, the protection was lost. No matter

how a Yid acts, there is never a *heter* to talk badly. A parent attending P.T.A. will never tolerate hearing a teacher talk in this manner about their child. They will respond, “I can say that about my child but you can’t”. By calling them “*morim*”, he lost his *siyata dishmaya* because HaShem does not want to “hear” people talking badly about His *kinderlach*.

It is interesting to note that later on in *Devarim* (9:7), when Moshe Rabbeinu reviews different events, he once again tells Klal Yisroel, ממררים הייתם עם ה' - *You have been rebelling against HaShem*. One would think that Moshe would learn from his mistake and not repeat it a second time, especially after it cost him so much, and yet, here again he calls them “*morim*”. I heard from Rav Zev Leff that the difference is simple. In our *parsha*, Moshe labeled them as rebels, whereas in *Devarim* Moshe was describing their actions as rebellious. What an amazing yet simple difference that we can definitely apply to the way we deal with people.

**מרדכי אפפֿעל, Good Shabbos,**



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