



דרכים בפרשה

שמות



וירא מלאך ה' אליו בלבת אש מתוך הסנה וירא והנה הסנה בער באש והסנה איננו אכל

An angel of Hashem appeared to him [Moshe] in the heart of a fire in the midst of a thorn-bush.

He looked and behold the bush was on fire, but the bush was not being consumed.

I would like to share a vort that I heard from the late Mashgiach, Rav Matisyahu Salomon zt"l: Two of the events that occurred in this week's parsha are of such importance that they still effect Klal Yisroel today. In this parsha, Hashem chose Moshe Rabbeinu as the leader of Klal Yisroel, and this is also the very first time that Hashem chose to speak to Klal Yisroel through Moshe.

Let us take a look at this very first occurrence: וירא מלאך ה' אליו בלבת אש מתוך הסנה וירא והנה הסנה בער באש והסנה איננו אכל - *An angel of Hashem appeared to him [Moshe] in the heart of a fire in the midst of a thorn-bush. He looked and behold the bush was on fire, but the bush was not being consumed.* Rashi explains: As a bush -- and not as any other tree -- to indicate, "I am with them in their time of trouble" (Imo Anochi b'Tzarah).

When a boy or a girl goes on a *shidduch*, or when an initial business meeting between two parties occurs, there is typically a major focus placed on that first impression that is made. If Hashem chose to introduce Himself to Moshe Rabbeinu and Klal Yisroel in this manner, clearly, Klal Yisroel is always meant to think of Hashem as being there with us in even the darkest moments.

The concept of "Imo Anochi b'Tzarah" is also the greatest manifestation of another expression which is often used when discussing sharing in another Yid's pain: *nosei b'ol im chaveiro*" (literally - carrying the yoke with his friend).

But now let us look at how Moshe responds: ויאמר משה אסרה נא ואראה את המראה הגדל הזה מדוע לא יבער - *Moshe said, "I must turn aside and see*

[investigate] this great sight. Why doesn't the bush burn?" So, Moshe Rabbeinu saw something that defied the logic and turned his head to understand it better. What was the result? וירא ה' כי סר לראות ויקרא אליו אלקים מתוך הסנה ויאמר משה ויאמר הנני - *When Hashem saw that [Moshe] turned aside to see, Hashem (Elokim) called to him from the midst of the thorn-bush, and said, "Moshe, Moshe."* He *[Moshe] said, "Here I am."*

From the flow of the pesukim, it seems that because Moshe came closer to check out the phenomenon of the burning bush, Hashem chose Moshe to become Moshe Rabbeinu.

More often than not, it occurs that on a drive along the highway, there is a phenomenon known as traffic. What is interesting is that even if there is an accident on the opposite side of the highway, both sides are backed up due to the cars slowing down to see what happened on the other side. Man's tendency is to turn towards something that is happening just for the sake of checking it out. In today's day and age, this practice has advanced to the smart phones coming out to video what is happening, כאלו - *as if*, everyone became a news reporter.

If a house was on fire and not being consumed, everyone would look at this defiance of nature as well. Accordingly, what was so great about Moshe turning his head to get a better look at a burning bush that was *not* being consumed? Who wouldn't stop and look?

On a basic level, we can answer this by saying that Moshe stopped to look, but he didn't just carry on with his flock of sheep; he actually pondered this and came to deeper understandings. He knew that

if he saw something, he was meant to learn a lesson from it.

However, the Medrash has a different take on this. According to the Medrash, וירא ה' כי סר לראות "And Hashem saw that he turned aside to see..." is not referring to the burning bush at all. It actually refers to Moshe's turning aside to see (while still in Mitzrayim) the affliction of the Jewish people. Moshe had it all. He was a prince in the house of Pharaoh, but he still went out to check up on his brothers' welfare. This is the event referred to by וירא ה' כי סר לראות "And Hashem saw that he (Moshe) turned aside to see".

It was this *middah* of Moshe Rabbeinu that made him fitting for the role of the greatest leader of all time, and it was this *middah* that Hashem chose to introduce Himself to Moshe Rabbeinu and Klal Yisroel for the very first time, letting His children know that He will always be there checking up on the needs. This is the *mashul* of appearing in a burning bush. "*Imo anochi b'tzarah*" - when you are in pain I am in pain as well!

The Baal HaTurim in Parshas Miketz on the passuk ויליוסף ילד שני בנים בטרם תבוא שנת הרעב "And to Yosef were born two sons before the years of famine came."]. The gemara (Taanis 11a) learns from here the Halacha that a person is forbidden to engage in marital relations with his wife during a time of famine. It is not as if one's abstaining from pleasure will relieve the suffering of others, but rather, it demonstrates that one wishes to associate with those who suffer: "*Imo anochi b'tzarah*". From here we learn that Yosef, like Moshe, was also one who suffered together with his fellow man.

The word "u'l'Yosef" - and to Yosef is only found twice in the Torah; in Parshas Mikeitz (see above) and in V'Zos Habracha ויליוסף אמר מברכת ה' ארצו "And to Yosef it was said: Blessed by Hashem is his land...". The Baal HaTurim explains that because Yosef abstained from personal pleasure while others were suffering, he merited that Hashem blessed his land. This was *midah k'neged middah*.

Rav Matisyahu zt"l commented that in the brachos of Yosef in V'Zos HaBracha it is written: וממגד ארץ "and with the delicacies of the land and its fullness; and by the goodwill of He who rests in the thorn bush, let this be visited upon Yosef's head". This is the only place in the Chumash in which Hashem is referred to by the title "He who rests in the thorn bush"! Rashi writes that Moshe is blessing Yosef with the thought ותהא ארצו מברכת מרצונו ונחת רוחו של הקב"ה "May his land be blessed out of the goodwill and contentment of Hakadosh Boruch Hu, Who was first revealed to me in the thorn bush."

The Aibishter's "Shalom Aleichem" to Klal Yisrael was through the *sneh* to demonstrate *Imo anochi b'tzarah*. He picked Moshe because he had this *middah*. Finally, Moshe blessed Yosef while referencing this *middah* as well because he too always thought of others, thus invoking the bracha of the "the One who rests in the thorn bush".

Just before one of the weddings of the Salomon children, one of their neighbors, Rabbi Epstein passed away. The families were close and it was unimaginable that the Epstein's would not be at the wedding. During the wedding, at the Epstein home, there was a knock on the door. The Mashgiach zt"l arranged that separate pictures should be taken of the chupah, and developed right away. These pictures would be brought to the Epstein's during the wedding so that "in real time", they could join in the simcha as well. (This is just a small story about a man that had a heart and ears for all tzaros and simchos in Klal Yisrael, always thinking about everyone else. **Yehi zichro Baruch**)

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,



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