

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'eiz

Parshas Shemos

And Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Lord, why have You harmed this people? Why did You send me?"(Shemot 5:22).

And Rashi, of blessed memory, comments: **"And if you ask, what difference does it make to you? I complain that You sent me."**

The moral lesson here is clear: no person should inquire into or involve themselves in matters that do not pertain to them. Even Moses Rabbeinu, our teacher, who might have been justified in being distressed over the suffering of Israel—since he encompasses all of Israel—still, the question of "what difference does it make to you" applies. As the verse states, "Concerning My children and the work of My hands, will you command Me?" (Isaiah 45:11) This implies it is akin to intervening in a dispute that is not one's own.

However, the truth is that Scripture testifies about Moses, "Now the man Moses was exceedingly humble." And as the sages say, "Wherever you find His greatness, there you find His humility." When God said to Moses, "Go, and I will send you to Pharaoh, and you will bring My people, the Children of Israel, out of Egypt," Moses responded, "Please, my Lord, I am not a man of words... Send, please, through whomever You will send." This shows Moses' humility and his sense of unworthiness to lead Israel, for he felt that the redemption could not occur without human initiative, as implied by the phrase, "So that they will believe that the Lord appeared to you." The foundation of redemption is faith, and it is in the merit of faith that redemption comes.

The essence of exile is the lack of faith, which leads to reliance only on natural processes. This is evident from the Egyptian exile, where the people had sunk into the depths of impurity. If God had not taken Israel out at that moment, they would have remained enslaved forever, as they were deeply entrenched in impurity. Redemption was only possible through a complete transformation—from the 49th gate of impurity to the 47th gate of understanding (binah), which represents complete redemption through faith and knowledge of God. Once they became a "generation of knowledge," they were ready for redemption, as it is written, "This will be the sign for you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Moses, who could inspire faith through his heartfelt words, did not believe in himself due to his great humility. He did not see himself as capable of bringing about faith in others, as the sages say: "One who has fear of Heaven, his words are heeded." The essence of fear of Heaven is true attachment and unification with God, encompassing all virtues. Fear (yirah) is one quality, and Heaven (shamayim) represents love, as is known. When

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one nullifies all their attributes to God, He responds to them with a voice, and their words are heeded.

Thus, even one with fear of Heaven will only have their words heeded when they are actively engaged in such fear. But Moses said, "I pleaded with the Lord," indicating that he did not rely on his deeds but on God's gratuitous kindness, recognizing God's infinite greatness. Everything is as nothing before Him, even the highest realms being insignificant compared to the Cause of all causes. Moses questioned how it was possible to achieve complete attachment and unity with God while being physical and coarse. Not only would his words fail to inspire, but they might even cause harm, turning people's hearts toward materialism. Physical words could lead to false beliefs and increased opposition.

When God ultimately compelled Moses to speak to Israel, and when Dathan and Abiram stood against him (as Rashi comments on the word "standing" in their defiance), Moses attributed their resistance to his own shortcomings. He believed that his words had introduced a "poison" of opposition and strengthened the forces of resistance. Therefore, he complained, "Why have You harmed this people?"—implying that his words had worsened their situation. He further asked, "Why did You send me?"—suggesting that his physicality had caused their materialism to intensify.

God replied, "Now you will see." This implies that revelation and understanding must arise specifically through resistance. Without opposition, God's greatness cannot be recognized, as is evident from the creation of the world. Thus, God hardened Pharaoh's heart "so that My wonders may be multiplied," for the sake of publicizing the miracles.

[NOTE Summary:

Moses questions God, asking why He has harmed the Israelites and sent him on this mission. Rashi interprets this as Moses expressing his frustration at being sent, despite feeling unworthy and ineffective. The text highlights Moses' profound humility, his self-doubt, and his belief that redemption could only come through faith and divine intervention. It underscores the idea that opposition and challenges are integral to revealing God's greatness, as exemplified by Pharaoh's hardened heart, which ultimately led to the public demonstration of God's miracles.

Takeaway:

Faith and humility are essential for spiritual growth and redemption. Challenges and resistance, rather than being obstacles, serve as opportunities to reveal deeper truths

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and divine greatness. Even the most humble and righteous leaders, like Moses, must trust in God's plan and recognize that their own perceived inadequacies can be part of a greater divine purpose. **END NOTE]**