



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Vaeira 5760

In the beginning of our *parsha*, Moshe Rabeinu explains why he feels that he won't be an effective messenger to Pharaoh.

וַיִּדְבֹר מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי ה' לֵאמֹר הֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאִידֹךְ יִשְׁמְעֵנִי כִּרְעָה וְאֲנִי עֶרְלָה
שְׁפָתַיִם (Shmos 6/12).

(And Moshe said before Hashem, behold Bnei Yisrael didn't listen to me, and how will Pharaoh listen to me and I am unable to speak clearly)

The Midrash Rabbah (Bereishis 92/7), says that this is one of the ten applications of "*kal v'chomer*" (a priori argument), that is found in the Torah.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu responded:

וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּצִיֵם אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶל פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

(And Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, and he commanded them as to Bnei Yisrael and as to Pharaoh King of Mitzrayim, to take Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Mitzrayim) (Shmos 6/13)

Rashi explains the content of Hashem's command to Moshe and Aharon regarding Bnei Yisrael. "He commanded them to lead them gently and to bear them with patience". How did this command answer the *kal v'chomer* argument presented by Moshe Rabeinu?

The explanation seems to be that Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe Rabeinu that Bnei Yisrael's refusal to listen, can't be compared to that of Pharaoh. Moshe Rabeinu argued that the Jews were far more likely to



listen to him than Pharaoh was, and if he didn't succeed to get them to listen, how was he supposed to succeed with Pharaoh?

With the command to lead Bnei Yisrael gently and to bear them with patience, Hashem explained that Bnei Yisrael were simply incapable of listening to Moshe at that time. If Moshe Rabeinu would have had more forbearance and patience, he would have understood the depth of their suffering and would have never presented that *kal v'chomer* argument.

From that perspective, the *kal va'chomer* is essentially flawed. We have to imagine people who suffered for years, orphans, widows, widowers, and so many others. They were slaves who had to use every drop of their strength to fulfill their tasks. Their Egyptian taskmasters beat them mercilessly. Then, in the middle of this suffering, Moshe Rabeinu appears and tells them that they will go free. They probably were barely able to hear his voice among the screams of the overseers and their victim's cries of pain. Even if they managed to hear his words, it was impossible for Moshe's message to touch their heart in those circumstances.

Moshe Rabeinu understood and accepted Hashem's message as we see from an explanation of Rav Menachem of Amshinov zy" a on the *pasuk* וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' לֵאמֹר מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה לָעָם הַזֶּה עוֹד מֵעַט וְיִסָּקְלֵנִי.
(And Moshe cried to Hashem saying, what can I do for this nation, in a little bit they will stone me).

The Amshinover asked how Moshe Rabeinu could make such a statement about Bnei Yisrael. Isn't Moshe Rabeinu the *ra'aya me'hemna*, the loyal shepherd who always defended Bnei Yisrael, and was willing to give up everything for them? As we find in the Midrash (Devarim Rabbah 6/7) that Moshe said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Let Moshe and a hundred like him die in order to save even a fingernail of Bnei Yisrael from damage.

He explained that we have to understand the *pasuk* as Moshe Rabeinu's defense of Bnei Yisrael. He said, "What can I do for this nation? Didn't I take them all, men women and children, out to a desert without food and



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water. “*Od me’at u’skaluni*” - if they would stone me for that it would be only a fraction of the punishment I deserve.” These were the words of our leader Moshe Rabeinu, and this has been the approach of true leaders of Am Yisrael throughout the ages.

I heard something similar from the Gerrer Rebbe, the *Beis Yisrael zy”a*. He told me an explanation that he heard from R. Shloimele Kotzker zt”l, one of the most distinguished Gerer Chasidim, in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe zy”a. In Parshas Pinchas, Moshe Rabeinu asks Hashem to appoint a leader who will succeed him as the leader of Bnei Yisrael. This took place immediately after Pinchas acted as a true *kana’i* (zealot) and killed Zimri and the Midyani woman Kozbi.

The Kotzker explained that Moshe Rabeinu was impressed by Pinchas, and when he asked Hashem to appoint his successor, he meant Pinchas. However, Hakadosh Baruch Hu responded that a *kana’i* can’t be a leader. A leader has to have patience and interact with each individual in Am Yisrael in the way that is appropriate for that Jew and his situation.

This is also David Hamelech’s request in the *pasuk* זְכֹרֵנִי ה' בְּרָצוֹן עַמֶּךָ (Remember me Hashem in the desire of your nation). He asked Hashem to remind him, if he ever forgets to have patience and forbearance with Am Yisrael or to treat them gently, of “*ratzon amecha*”, the deep desires of Bnei Yisrael. He wanted to be sure that he didn’t forget that deep inside, every Jew wants to do good, and asked Hashem to remind him of this when necessary.

So too, when Eliyahu Hanavi said:

וַיֹּאמֶר קִנְאָה קִנְאַתִּי לַה' אֱלֹקֵי צִבְאוֹת כִּי עָזְבוּ בְרִיתֶךָ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מִזְבְּחֶיךָ הָרְסוּ
וְאֶת נְבִיאֶיךָ הָרְגוּ בַחֶרֶב וְאַתָּה אֲנִי לְבַדִּי וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ אֶת נַפְשִׁי לְקַחְתָּהּ.

(I have been zealous for Hashem the G-d of hosts for Bnei Yisrael have abandoned your covenant, destroyed your altars, and killed your *neviim* by the sword, and I have left alone and they seek to take my life).



[3]

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The Midrash (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1/38) says that Hashem responded, "Isn't it my covenant, and not your covenant? My altars and not yours, my *neviim* and not yours? Why do you care?" Eliyahu then responded that they want to take his life. After this prophecy he awoke and saw an "*ugas retzafim*", (a cake baked on coals). R. Shmuel Bar Nachman said that the word *retzafim* should be interpreted as an abbreviation of רוצץ פה (break the mouth). Hashem said let the mouth of anyone who prosecutes my children be broken."

I often remind people that everyone is a leader in one way or another. Some are meant to lead their children or their siblings, others lead their friends or students. Everyone has to remember the two preconditions for true Jewish leadership. First of all, to have forbearance and patience and also to remember to lead them gently and gradually.

However, even though we lead others gently and gradually, when it comes to our request from Hashem, we ask that he bring the *geulah* as quickly as possible
אכי"ר



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