

# Parshas Behaloscha

### **ATTENTION TO ATTITUDE**

When Ahron is instructed to light the Menora, we find that the Torah emphasises something seemingly out of place:

דָּבֵּר, אֶל-אַהְרֹן, וְאָמֵרְתָּ, אֱלִיו: בְּהַעֲלֹתְדּ, אֶת-הַגֵּרֹת, אֶל-מוּל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה, יָאִירוּ שִׁבְעַת הַגַּרוֹת. וַיַּעַשׁ כֵּן, אֲהְרֹן—אֶל-מוּל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה, יָאִירוּ שִׁבְעת הַגַּרוֹת. וַיַּעַשׁ כֵּן, אֲהְרֹן—אֶל-מוּל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה, אֶת-משָׁה Speak to Ahron, and say to him; "When you rise to kindle the lights on the Menora, light seven,". And Ahron did so; he lit the candles on the Menora, just as Hashem had commanded Moshe. (8: 2-3)

Rashi notes that אַפַעשׁ כֵּן – that the person commanded did as directed, is not regularly found in the Torah; it is assumed that when God speaks to you, you do as told. Rashi explains that it appears here to praise Ahron. The Sfas Emes takes the praise to mean that Ahron was meticulous to light the Menora every day himself, when in fact, it could have been done by any member of his family. That is to say, he retained the initial enthusiasm for the job his entire life – אַצָעשׁ בַּן as though that were the day he was instructed.

Later, we find this lesson lost:

בים ימים – They travelled from the mountain of God a three-day journey. (10: 33)

The Gemara in Shabbos teaches that this alludes to the Jews straying from their closeness to Hashem. They literally left where God was. Rashi notes that it was their departure from Sinai that cultivated their craving for meat – the manna was not enough. The Ramban compares their attitude to leaving Sinai to a child running out of school. They left Sinai – the place where they were exposed to God and the Torah – in excitement that the "class" was over.

The Chasam Sofer explains that had they not thrown off the yolk of Torah and fled like a child running from school, they never would have developed their infamous craving for meat. The Mishna in Avos says: "Whoever throws off the yoke of Torah, they place the yoke of drech eretz upon him,". There is a fixed amount of input that must be channeled one way or another. Derech eretz here refers to physical desires.

This catalysed an unfortunate chain of events. The Jews were supposed to go straight from receiving the Torah into Eretz Yisrael. Yet, because of the attitude with which they left Mount Sinai, they developed their craving for meat. Because of their craving for meat, they were delayed for 30 days while many were lost to plague. This delay allowed the opportunity for Miriam to slander Moshe, causing a further delay of seven days while waiting for her purification. The episode of the spies followed, deduced from the juxtaposition of the episodes of Miriam next to the episode of the spies; due to which the fate of that generation was sealed. They were to die out over the course

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of the next 40 years, never to reach Eretz Yisrael.

It was during that time that Moshe Rabbeinu himself was denied the opportunity to enter Eretz Yisrael because of the incident wherein he struck the rock. Had Moshe Rabbeinu entered Eretz Yisrael, there never would have been a destruction of the Holy Temple, and the ensuing exile. History would have been drastically different.

What emerges is that Judaism is not exclusively about learning Torah and doing mitzvos, regardless of one's intentions and attitude. Chovos halevavos, duties of the heart and spirit, are critical. It is because of poor attitude to how we relate to Torah and mitzvos that we find ourselves in galus to this day.

## SILENCE IS GOLDEN

There is a proverb found in the Gemara – מילי בסלע, שתיקותא – literally; "Words can be worth a coin, but but silence is worth two!".

It is intended to illustrate the power of being introvert, not speaking when not required.

The Vilna Gaon says that the etymology of the proverb is directly sourced the parsha.

is a unit of currency, but literally translates to "rock". Eldad and Medad foretold that Moshe was going to die and Yehoshua would bring them into Israel – משה מת, יהושע מכניס – Moshe was to remain in the desert, for the sin of hitting the rock and not speaking to it.

In other words שתיקותא בתרי - if Moshe had spoken to the rock, then שתיקותא בתרי; the two, Eldad and Meidad, would have remained silent – never predicting Moshe's downfall. Truly, the power of not speaking up.

#### **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS**

A puzzling event takes place, wherein people start prophesying in the main camp when the 'spirit of Hashem rests on them'. Two men in particular continue after the others stop. A lad runs to Moshe to report that אלדד ומידד - "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp". Yehoshua leapt up and advised Moshe to imprison them. Moshe retorted that he wished everyone were a prophet. End of episode.

What exactly is the issue? Moshe's reaction seems like a no-brainer? What is wrong with prophecy? And why the extra word במחנה – where else would they be?

Rashi quotes the Gemara in Sanhedrin that re-frames what transpired. They foresaw that משה מת, יהושע מכניס – "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will take the lead into Israel,". Yehoshua took great umbrage at their outrageous claim, and Moshe calmed him by pointing out the prophetic nature of their words.

But where does the Gemara get the idea that these were the words of Eldad and Medad?

The Maharil Diskin explains that a look at Moshe's beginning hints at his downfall. When the abandoned Moshe is found by Pharaoh's daughter, she names him Moshe – כי מן המים משיתהו – "for I drew him out of the water". There is an emphasis on the definite article – "the water". Naming him משיתהו was contingent on שיתהו – it wasn't specific to "the" water. In other words, she could well have said ממים משיתהו – "for I drew him from water,". The letters ב and ה seem extra as a result.

מת- which can literally be rendered – במחנה – which can literally be rendered – מים – which can literally be rendered – נ-ה – "erase the ממים במים from how Moshe was named, and it says – ממים משיתהו has the initial letters of משה מת יהושע מכניס במחנה The emphasis of במחנה perhaps explains how Chazal understood what they truly foresaw – re-framing our understanding of the episode.

#### **ON ANTAGONISTS**

Avraham is blessed by Hashem after the Akeida:

בי בָרֶךְ אֲבֶרֶכְדְּ וְהַרְבָּה אֶת זַּרְעֶךְ כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשְּׁמֵיִם וְכַחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל שְׂפַת הַיָּם וְיִרַשׁ זַרְעֶךְ אֵת שַׁעֵר אֹיְבִיוּ – I will bless you, and I will greatly multiply your descendants, like the stars of the heavens, and like the sand on the seashore; and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies. (22:17)

Years later, Lavan blesses Rivka as she leaves to marry Yitzchak:

וְיָבֶרֵכוּ אֶת רַבְקָה וְיִּירֵשׁ זַרְעֵךְ אֵת שַׁעֵר שּׂנְאָיו - And they blessed Rebecca and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of myriads, and may your seed inherit the cities of those who hate you." (24: 60)

Rashi notes that Lavan is quoting the blessing received by Avraham, that she'd "inherit the cities" of her antagonists.

But the quote is not identical. What is the difference between איביי – enemies and שנאיי – those who hate you?

R' Yehoshua Hartman points to where the two are used in conjunction to note the difference.

קיָהִי בְּנְטֹעַ הָאָרן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה ה' וְיָפֵצוּ אֹיְבֶיךּ וְיָנָסוּ מְשַׂנְאֶיךּ מִפְנֶיךּ So it was, whenever the Ark set out, Moses would say, "Arise, Lord, may Your enemies be scattered and may those who hate You flee from You."

Rashi says that אויביך is enemies who are assembled for battle, and that אויביך are pursuers.

There is a distinction between an enemy and a pursuer. The word אוהב is is similar in root to the word אוהב - to love. Both verbs are a result of closeness. A שונא however, is someone whose hatred transcends proximity, and will pursue.

Eisav is referred to as אויב ישראל, and Yishmael is referred to as אויב ישראל, and circumstances on the ground reflect this – if a Jewish State had been set up in Uganda, there would be no problems with the Palestinians and neighbours, inheritors of the mantle of Yishmael – the situation is a result of being together. Conversely, the Nazis had little to do with Jews worldwide, and yet their extermination campaign spanned the globe; truly the definition of רודף.

But how does this insight correlate to the different terminology Rivka and Avraham were blessed with?

R' Hartman explains that at Mt. Moriah, the blessing was to Avraham, for Yitzchak, regarding his Yishmael – the אויב, therefore the pasuk says שַׁעֵר אֹיְבָיו. In contrast, Rivka received a bracha that was for Yakov, regarding Esav, and Esav is a שִׁעֵר שׁנָאָיו. and therefore the pasuk says שַׁעֵר שׁנָאָיו.

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