

# Zera Shimshon

*Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"o, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.*



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### אמרות שמשון

#### *How Moshe's Utmost Humbleness Counteracts Miriam's Loshon Hora About Him*

וַתְּדַבֵּר מֵרִים וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמֹשֶׁה עַל אֲדוֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכְּשִׁית אֲשֶׁר לָקַח כִּי אִשָּׁה כְּשִׁית לָקַח וְאָמְרוּ הִרְק אֶךְ בְּמֹשֶׁה דְבַר ה' הֲלָא גַם בְּנוֹ דְבַר וַיִּשְׁמָע ה' וְהֵאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מְכַל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה (יב א-ג)

*Miriam and Aharon spoke about Moshe... They said, “Was it only with Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak with us, as well?”... Now, the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth.*

We need to understand why the Torah feels it necessary to tell us about Moshe's great humbleness, soon after telling us about Miriam's slander to Aharon about him. It doesn't seem that the Torah's intention is to enlighten us how it came to be that after hearing himself be defamed, Moshe just accepted the insult quietly without responding to her words at all. For, if that was the Torah's intention, it would have sufficed to tell us that he was an ordinary humble person, of whom the Gemara in Yuma (טו ע"א) tells us that שומעין חרפתן – ואינן משיבין – they hear their disgrace but do not reply, and there is no reason for the Torah to need to explicitly describe Moshe as being the most humble person ever.

There is something else that is extremely difficult to comprehend. After seeing Moshe going up to the Heavens and being in such close proximity of the Shechinah, something which neither they nor anyone else has ever merited, how did Aharon and Miriam find the heart to say about Moshe דבר בן דבר ה', הלא גם בנו דבר – “Was it only with Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak with us, as well?”, when it was ever so clear that Moshe's direct contact to Hashem was of a much greater level than that of their own?

We must say that Aharon and Miriam were both convinced that the reason Moshe reached these great heights of prophecy - up until ascending to the Heavens - wasn't necessarily in his own merit, rather was in the merit of the Jewish People of whom he was an emissary, and indeed any other prophet who would have been in

that same position would merit that same close relationship to Hashem, even ascending to the Heavens. This idea, that Moshe merited his exalted greatness as a result of his being the envoy for the Jewish people, is indeed quite clear in the Gemara Yuma (טו ע"א) where we find the following dialogue, which took place between Hashem and Moshe after the sin of the Golden Calf. וידבר ה' אל משה, למך רד, מאי לך רד, אמר ר' אלעזר, אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, משה רד מגדולתך, כלום נתתי לך רד. מלאך רד, אמר ר' אלעזר, אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, משה רד מגדולתך, כלום נתתי לך רד. מאי לך רד, אמר ר' אלעזר, אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, משה רד מגדולתך, כלום נתתי לך רד. מלאך רד, אמר ר' אלעזר, אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, משה רד מגדולתך, כלום נתתי לך רד. The Passuk says, ‘And Hashem spoke to Moshe: “Go, descend, for your people that you have brought up from Egypt have become corrupt”. What is meant by the phrase, “Go, descend”?’ [i.e. This phrase cannot be understood literally, for had Moshe actually been commanded to descend, he would have complied immediately, yet the Torah records that Moshe remained and continued to converse with Hashem.] R' Elazar said; Hashem said to Moshe, “Moshe descend from your position of greatness. Did I grant you greatness other than for the sake of the Jewish People, but now that the Jews sinned what need have I for you?” [i.e. The exalted level granted to Moshe was only so that he can lead the Nation to accept and observe the Torah. Now that they have sinned, he needed to descend from that lofty perch.] It was this thought in mind that brought Aharon and Miriam to talk disrespectfully about Moshe, and say, “Was it only with Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak with us, as well?”



It was after this incident, of Aharon and Miriam saying Loshon Hora about Moshe as a result of the grave misconception that Moshe's greatness was solely as a result of him representing the Jews, that Hashem wanted to correct the matter by shedding light on Moshe's true greatness and worthiness, which was the genuine cause for his exalted level of prophecy. It was for this reason that the Torah felt it appropriate to specifically discuss Moshe's noble level of humbleness, which is the trait needed to be worthy of prophecy, as the Gemara Sotah (ה ע"א) says, ואת דכא ושפל רוח, אני את דכא – The Passuk that says, ‘I am with the unassuming and modest’, means to say that the Shechinah descends to those who are modest and humble. Thereby, to counteract the notion that Moshe in his own personal level was not worthy of that exalted level of prophecy, the Torah writes that on the contrary, Moshe was on a level of unprecedented humbleness, and because humbleness is the attribute needed to be worthy of prophecy, it was for this very reason that Moshe was chosen to be the emissary of the Jews, which would need him to assume unprecedented levels of prophecy.

(ורע שמשון פרשתנו אות ו)

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**וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' לֵאמֹר אֵל-לֹא רָפָא נָא (יב, יג)  
And Moshe cried to Hashem saying, Hashem  
please (nah) heal her. (Bamidbar 13/12)**

Rashi explains; Hashem, please heal her: This possuk teaches (derech erez) proper conduct, that if one asks a friend for a favor, he should precede [his request] with two or three words of supplication, and only then should he make his request. Saying: What is the meaning of the word, "saying"? Moshe said to Hashem; Tell me if You are going to cure her or not.

Rashi was bothered with two difficulties in this possuk. Firstly, what is the purpose of the word "laimor", "saying", in the first phrase of the possuk, "Vayitzak Moshe al Hashem laimor", and Moshe cried out to Hashem saying? Seemingly, it would have been enough if it was written Vayitzak Moshe laHashem, and Moshe cried out to Hashem, Hashem please heal her. Rashi's answer is that Moshe asked Hashem to inform him if Hashem had answered his prayer or not.

Rashi's second problem is with the second half of the possuk. What is the word "nah", "please", adding? Rashi answered that it is to teach Derech Eretz. A person should always introduce a request with a few nice words.

Zera Shimshon asks on Rashi, why did Rashi first explain the second part of the possuk, It is more sensible to explain the possuk in the order that it is write.

Zera Shimshon gives two answers.

The first answer is that Rashi didn't write it, but Rashi was bothered by a third kasha. The word, "nah", which we translated simply as, "please", really implies please fulfill my request right away. According to this what does it mean that Moshe asked Hashem if he fulfilled his request to heal Miriam or not? Moshe could see for himself if Hashem answered his prayer or not; if Miriam was immediately healed, Hashem answered his prayers and if not, Hashem didn't answer his prayer. There was no reason for Moshe to ask Hashem to inform him if Hashem was going to answer his prayers or not!

Rashi therefore first explained that "nah" doesn't mean "immediately" but it is used here simply as an expression of derech erez. After that is established, Rashi can now explain that the word, "saying" means that Moshe asked Hashem to inform him if his prayers were answered or not.

The second explanation begins with another question.

The halacha is that one should not raise his voice when he davvens to Hashem. This being so, what does it mean Vayitzak Moshe laHashem, and Moshe cried out to Hashem, a person is meant to davven quietly? The answer is that it is also written in Shulchan Aruch that it is not a blanket prohibition but if it is permitted to davven loud if his intention is to teach his family members the proper way to davven. Therefore, in this incident it was permitted for Moshe to raise his voice because he wanted to teach Bnei Yisroel derech erez, that a person should always preface a request with a few nice words.

He didn't teach them this halacha until this incident because Moshe was concerned that the people wouldn't realize that it is only permitted to davven out loud for educational purposes and they would mistakenly learn from Moshe that it is always permitted to davven out loud.

However, now that Moshe was davvening to heal his sister Miriam there was also another reason for Moshe to davven out loud, to remove any suspicion that he is only davvening to Hashem for Miriam since she is his sister. When they heard that it was a very short text and Moshe didn't even mention her name, no one suspected him of favoritism and that Moshe would have davvened for any member of Clal Yisroel if they would be in the same situation.

However, even though there were two reasons why Moshe davvened out loud, to teach derech erez and to cleanse himself from any suspicion of favoritism, Moshe still wasn't sure if he did the right thing and that people will still learn from him that it is always permitted to davven out loud without exception. Therefore, after it is written Vayitzak Moshe laHashem, "and Moshe cried out to Hashem", it is written laimor, "saying", meaning that Moshe wanted Hashem to tell him that He answered his prayers and this would be a sign that he did the right thing. If Hashem would reply in the negative, then, even if Hashem healed Miriam, Moshe would know that he erred by davvening out loud.

Therefore, concludes Zera Shimshon, since Moshe's davvening out loud the word "nah", "please", was the reason that he asked Hashem to tell him if he was right or wrong, Rashi first explained what "nah" means and then what "laimor", "saying", means even though that "laimor" is written before "nah."

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Translated and written by Rabbi Moshe Spira - yomospira@gmail.com

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USA - Rabbi Menachem Binyomin Paskesz 347-496-5657 mbpaskesz@gmail.com  
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