

ספר שמות, which we're going to discuss for a couple of moments here, is a ספר of גאולה, as many of the מפרשים point out. We start out with יציאת מצרים and conclude with the משכן. That's the entire ספר שמות in one sentence - a tremendous גאולה. There are many reasons we were זוכה to this גאולה, and I'd like to discuss one of them from a very interesting and enigmatic portion of פרשת שמות.

הקב"ה reveals Himself to משה רבינו at the סנה (3:2): וְהִסְנֶה אֵינֶנּוּ אֶפְלֹ. As an aside, the word אייניקל, which I've probably taught to many of my children and אייניקלעך, comes from the root of אֶפְלֹ - many people don't know that. Returning to the topic, in this enigmatic scene, after the סנה, הקב"ה tells משה, "I want you to go to מצרים and get the Jews out." What does משה say? "Sure, Hashem, I'm glad to go"? No, he didn't say that. Rather, he said, "No, I don't want to go. I'm not worthy to go. I shouldn't go. I can't speak well because of my speech impediment." This goes on and on, פסוק after פסוק, with משה repeatedly saying "No." Finally, the פסוק states (4:14): וַיֵּאָמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶתְּחִידְךָ לְלֹי; משה became angry with ה'; וַיַּחַר אַף ה' בְּמֹשֶׁה (4:14) will be your spokesman. However, the פסוק uses a very powerful לשון אף: וַיַּחַר אַף ה', which in English is generally translated as "Hashem's anger flared up against משה," because משה felt he wasn't the right person to take בני ישראל out of מצרים.

The גמרא in ע"א explains that according to רבי יהושע בן קרחה, that every time the תורה uses the phrase וַיַּחַר אַף, it indicates some sort of עונש, because Hashem doesn't get angry, but anger כביכול flares up. However, רבי יהושע בן קרחה points out one exception: in our פסוק, משה רבינו doesn't receive any punishment.

But, as always, there's a מחלוקת ר' שמעון בר יוחי disagrees and asserts that משה רבינו was indeed punished. How do we see this? The פסוק says וַיַּחַר אַף ה' בְּמֹשֶׁה אֶתְּחִידְךָ לְלֹי. We know אֶתְּחִידְךָ is not referred to as לוי; why does the תורה call him הלוי? We know that אֶתְּחִידְךָ was destined to be the כהן גדול. With these words, the מדרש explains that משה was telling ה', "I had intended for you to be the כהן גדול and for אֶתְּחִידְךָ to remain a לוי. But now, because of your repeated refusals, you will remain a לוי, and he will be the כהן גדול." This raises a question: even רבי יהושע בן קרחה would seem to have to admit that this outcome is a punishment. After all, we know that אֶתְּחִידְךָ became the כהן גדול and משה remained a לוי. So how could רבי יהושע בן קרחה claim that משה wasn't punished?

R' Chaim Shmuelevitz offers a powerful insight from the מדרש. When ניסוך השמן was performed during אֶתְּחִידְךָ's inauguration as כהן גדול, משה רבינו witnessed the oil flowing over אֶתְּחִידְךָ's head, down his face, and onto his beard. The מדרש describes how משה was so thrilled and joyous that it was as if the oil was being poured on his own head. משה's joy at his brother's elevation to כהן גדול was immense and entirely genuine as if it was going down on his own beard. From this מדרש, רבי יהושע בן קרחה's position becomes clear. Even though משה lost the opportunity to become כהן גדול, it wasn't considered a punishment. His שמחה for his brother's accomplishment was so deep and sincere that it was as if he himself had been appointed כהן גדול. This is a tremendous מדרגה, especially when we consider the קנאה seen among יוסף's brothers and the lack of קנאה exemplified by מנשה and אפרים. משה's ability to feel such genuine happiness for his brother is extraordinary.

How can we hope to achieve this level? First, by learning about it. Second, by practicing it. Third, by inculcating within ourselves the ability to genuinely rejoice in the success of others without jealousy. הקב"ה gives everyone exactly what is meant for them. Never feel bad about someone else's achievements. In fact, פונקט פארקערט, you should be thrilled for them. Strive to make your happiness for someone else equal to the joy you'd feel if you had achieved it yourself. In that זכות, we will have a גאולה, all our ישיועה and all of ישראל will have a tremendous ישיועה. We're in the midst of this difficult and horrible מלחמה. May הקב"ה grant each תל and every Jew, wherever they are, tremendous הצלחה. Here in לארץ, we are also facing ניסיונות, being ridiculed and threatened. Bezras Hashem, we should all hear good news. Have a good שבת!

