



## Parshas Behaalosecha 2023, worthy of praise

*The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Ruchma Leah Bas Sarah. May all those who need experience a speedy and quick recovery with G-d's help.*

*The Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Daniel Aaron Ben Yigal, Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

Our Parsha starts with G-d telling Moshe that Aaron's job is to light the Menorah daily in the Mishkan (the Tabernacle). G-d then gave Moshe the instructions for how the tribe of Levi had to purify themselves before working in the Mishkan. They had to remove all their body hair, be sprinkled with ashes, and bring two special sacrifices.

While the Jewish people were traveling, they began to complain to Moshe. They were unhappy because they only ate Man, the special bread from Heaven, and they wanted meat instead. They longed for the foods they had in Egypt, like fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic.

Moshe became very angry and spoke to G-d, asking why he had to bear the burden of leading the people alone. In response, G-d sent quail birds from the ocean to provide meat for the Jewish people. However, those who complained and were gluttonous were punished by G-d and died because they lacked faith.

The Parsha ends with Miriam, Moshe's sister, being afflicted with Tzara'as (a skin condition) for speaking ill of Moshe to her brother, Aaron. She was sent outside the camp and had to spend seven days in isolation before returning, the Jewish people waited for her to return before continuing their journey.

However, a question comes to mind: When G-d heard Miriam and Aaron speaking about Moshe, He **suddenly** called all three of them to the Tent of Meeting. But G-d only rebuked Miriam and Aaron and not Moshe. Why did G-d call all three if He was only going to speak to Miriam and Aaron?

The Ramban, Rav Moshe Ben Nachman, a leading Torah scholar in the 12th century, gives an interesting explanation. He says that the word "suddenly" is used because Moshe had a high level of prophecy, which allowed him to speak to G-d at any time. Unlike others, including his brother and sister, who needed to be in a specific location or prepare before speaking to G-d.

The Ramban explains that G-d spoke to Miriam instead of allowing the Tzara'as to develop naturally, for it would have led to speculation and doubt about its origin. So G-d confronted Miriam in recognition of her past actions that saved Moshe's life when he was a baby.

But G-d used Moshe's holiness to speak with Miriam and address the hurtful words she had said about her brother. This is why Moshe was called out first, followed by his sister and brother, but then excluded from G-d's reprimand of Miriam and Aaron.

However, the Baal HaTurim, Rav Yakkov Ben Asher, gives a deeper and more profound explanation in his commentary, the Tur HaAroch. He writes that G-d excluded Moshe the second time because He was going to praise him and highlight his virtues.

In G-d's response to Miriam (12:7-8), He says about Moshe that he is trusted in G-d's household, and G-d speaks to him plainly without riddles. Yet earlier in the same chapter, we learn that Moshe was the most humble person on earth. Since G-d was going to acclaim Moshe's holiness and humility, He did not call him forward the second time.

The Baal HaTurim teaches us from this that one should not praise a person excessively in their presence because it can make them arrogant and egotistical.

While we can publicly praise someone to honor their kindness, dedication, and commitment to a cause, going too far with praise can lead to negative consequences. It can make others jealous and spiteful and even harm the person receiving the recognition by making them arrogant.

Extreme praise can make a person forget the true source of their success. Was it luck, their intelligence, or their business acumen? Or was it G-d guiding and blessing them to share His gifts with the world?

G-d did not publicly glorify Moshe Rabbeinu, the most humble person, to teach us a powerful lesson that excessive flattery can lead to ruin. As Dovid Hamelech writes in Tehillim (12:3-6), *שוא ידברו איש את-רעהו שפת חלקות בלב ולב ידברו - men speak lies to one another; their speech is smooth; they talk with duplicity.* *יכרת ה' כל-שפתי חלקות לשון מדברת גדלות - May the G-d cut off all flattering lips, every tongue that speaks arrogance.* *אשר אמרו ללשוננו נגביר שפתינו אתנו מי אדון לנו - They say, "By our tongues, we shall prevail; with lips such as ours, who can be our master?"* *משד עניים - Because of the groans of the poor and needy, I will now act," says the G-d. "I will give help."*

In our daily lives, it is imperative to realize that humility is crucial in how we perceive ourselves and interact with others. True humility is not about underestimating our worth or diminishing our abilities; instead, it is a shift in focus from ourselves to others.

When we are humble and act with humility, we cultivate a sense of empathy and compassion; we create space to truly listen and understand the experiences and perspectives of others. We grow, learn and expand our knowledge, continuously seeking to better ourselves and achieve our G-dly potential.

**"Humility is not thinking less of yourself,  
it's thinking of yourself less."**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*