

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vaera 5784

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Hashem sent Moshe to deliver Bnei Yisroel.

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה בֶּן אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִקְצֹר רוּחַ וּמֵעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה:

“And Moshe spoke thusly to Bnei Yisroel, but they did not give ear to Moshe, from their diminished spirits and their difficult labors.” (Shmos 6:9).

Bnei Yisroel seemed to listen to Moshe previously. (Ibid 4:29). Was the lack of straw so difficult that they could not longer heed Moshe? Also, this entire segment seems to repeat what was already recorded in Parshas Shmos. Why is it repeated?

As the Torah is wont to do, it does not write in a linear pattern. It often will write events and instructions in short-form and then will elaborate them later when the context makes more sense. That is what the Torah does at the beginning of Sefer Shmos. Moshe saw the malakh of Hashem appear as a flame within the thornbush. (Ibid 3:2). Hashem then summoned Moshe telling him, “I am the Lord of your father, the Lord of Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov.” (Ibid 3:6). Hashem says further, “I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov as Kel Shakkai.” (Ibid 6:3). Hashem remembered the covenant with them to give them the Land. (Ibid 2:24). “I established my covenant with them.” (Ibid 6:4). Hashem heard the groaning and cries under the hard labor. (Ibid 2:23). Therefore, he summoned Moshe. He told Moshe, “I have also heard the groaning...and I remember the bris.” (Ibid 6:5). “I have surely seen their affliction...and I heard the cries.” (Ibid 3:7). This all happened together. The Torah elaborates here (perek 6) what the conversation was with Moshe before (perek 3).

Hashem tells Moshe that He has come down to rescue Bnei Yisroel and bring them to the Land. (Ibid 3:8). It is elaborated: **לָכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִתַּחַת סִבְלַת מִצְרַיִם: וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲבֹדָתָם וְגֵאלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים:** “Therefore, say to Bnei Yisroel, ‘I am Hashem, and I will take you out from under your Mitzrayim caused burdens, and I will rescue you from the indentured servitude, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great justice.’” (Ibid 6:6). Hashem promised to take Bnei Yisroel as His people. (Ibid 6:7). And He will bring them to the Land promised to Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. (Ibid 6:8). It’s the same conversation.

Moshe questions his own ability to be Hashem’s servant. (Ibid 3:11). The sign given to Moshe is that Hashem will bring the people first to the Mountain of Hashem (Har Sinai) to worship Hashem. (Ibid 3:12). Hashem then tells Moshe to assemble the elders and give them the message. (Ibid 3:16). “And Moshe and Aharon went and assembled the elders of Bnei Yisroel.” (Ibid 4:29). Hashem tells Moshe that the Bnei Yisroel will listen to His voice. (Ibid 3:18). And the people believed and they heard. (Ibid 4:31).

Hashem warns Moshe that Pharaoh will not consent immediately. (Ibid 3:19). That will cause Hashem to perform wonders and strike at Eretz Mitzrayim. (Ibid 3:20). Indeed, Pharaoh does not listen to Moshe. (Ibid 5:2). Instead, he made their bondage harder by no longer providing Bnei Yisroel with straw. (Ibid 5:7). Perplexingly, although Hashem already said this would happen, Moshe still complains as to why Hashem sent him (ibid 5:22) and failed to deliver the people (ibid 5:23). The answer is, this is when Hashem actually told Moshe about the refusal. "I will make Pharaoh's heart difficult, and I will multiply My signs and wonders in Eretz Mitzrayim." (Ibid 7:3). Pharaoh will not listen and Hashem would lay His hand on the country and take the people out. (Ibid 7:4).

Moshe persists in saying that he was not the right messenger. (Ibid 4:1). Hashem gives Moshe signs to perform. (Ibid 4:2-9). Moshe then says that he cannot be the messenger because he is "heavy in language." (Ibid 4:10). Moshe renews this point after he tries speaking to Bnei Yisroel, our pasuk. He tried talking to them but they were too involved in their oppressive work to give heed. (Ibid 6:9). "Lo! Bnei Yisroel did not listen to me, how will Pharaoh listen to me? Further, I have covered lips." (Ibid 6:12). To aid Moshe, Hashem says that Aharon is already coming to meet him. (Ibid 4:14). Hashem sent Aharon to meet Moshe in the wilderness. (Ibid 4:27). Hashem tells Moshe to speak to Aharon, Hashem would speak to Moshe, and Aharon would speak to the people. (Ibid 4:15). Aharon will be the mouth and Moshe will be the lord over Pharaoh. (Ibid 4:16). The Torah explains further that Hashem made Moshe like a lord or judge over Pharaoh (a noble worthy of talking to the Pharaoh) and Aharon to be Moshe's adviser. (Ibid 7:1).

Hashem concluded the instruction by telling Moshe to take his staff that is in his hands to perform the signs. (Ibid 4:17). Hashem then hinted at the final strike against the Country of Egypt. If they refuse to send out Bnei Yisroel Hashem will strike their firstborn. (Ibid 4:23). Hashem also told Moshe the He would make the people find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians (ibid 3:21) and that they will borrow gold and jewelry from them (ibid 3:22). This came to pass. (Ibid 12:35-36).

With this context it is also plain that Moshe and Aharon performed the staff to sea serpent wonder at their first meeting with Pharaoh. Moshe answered Pharaoh that the Lord of the Hebrews called to them asking for a three-day service in the wilderness. (Ibid 5:3). Pharaoh reacted poorly to this. (Ibid 5:5). Why was Pharaoh so worked up, even to increase the burdens? It is because he was inspired by his own necromancers who matched this supposed desert deity of the Hebrews. Aharon cast his staff before Pharaoh and it turned into a sea serpent. (Ibid 7:10). Unimpressed, the necromancers did the same. (Ibid 7:12). Even though Aharon's staff then consumed their staffs, Pharaoh remained unimpressed. (Ibid 7:13). In fact, he became brash enough to increase the burdens. This is exactly as Hashem predicted. (Ibid 7:14).

“And Moshe and Aharon did just like Hashem commanded, so they did.” (Ibid 7:6). They did just as they were instructed in perakim 3 to 6. The Torah then recounts how it unfolded. It was not that Bnei Yisroel did not want to listen but their burdens did not allow them to break and heed Moshe. However, after seeing the signs performed and knowing Hashem noticed them and their burdens, they listened and bowed. (Ibid 4:31).