

B'SIYATTA D'SHEMIYAH

ZERA SHIMSHON

Fascinating excerpts and intriguing discourses from the works of the great Gaon and kabbalist Morainu HaRav **Shimshon Chaim ben Reb Nachman Michael Nachmani** Author of *Zera Shimshon* and *Toldos Shimshon* who lived almost 300 years ago.

HE PROMISED THAT WHOEVER LEARNS HIS WORKS WILL SEE HELP WITH CHILDREN, LONG LIFE, AND PARNASSAH. MANY PEOPLE CAN ATTEST TO THEIR PERSONAL SALVATIONS!



THE LEARNING IS
FOR A MERIT FOR
THE HOLY AUTHOR
OUR TEACHER
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PASSED AWAY 6
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Parshas Bahalosecha

And *Moshe* cried to *Hashem* saying, *Hashem* please (*nah*) heal her. (Bamidbar 13/12)

Hashem, please heal her: This *possuk* teaches (*derech erez*) proper conduct, that if one asks his 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*).

Zera Shimshon asks on *Rashi*, the word "saying" is written before the phrase "*Hashem* please cure her" so why did *Rashi* first explain the phrase "*Hashem* please cure her" and after that he explained the word "saying" which is not in the order that these words are written in the *possuk*?

He gives two answers.

The first answer is that *Rashi* was bothered by a seeming inconsistency in the *possuk*. The word, "*nah*", which we translated simply as, "please", usually connotes a polite way to ask for something to be done immediately. If this is so, then the meaning of "saying" cannot be that *Moshe* asked

Hashem to tell him if *Hashem* will cure *Miriam* or not. Since *Moshe* asked that *Miriam* should have an immediate recovery then *Moshe* will see for himself if *Hashem* answered his prayer or not. If *Moshe* sees that *Miriam* was healed then *Moshe* will know that *Hashem* answered his prayer. If *Moshe* didn't see that she was cured then he will know that his prayer was not answered. There was no reason for *Moshe* to ask *Hashem* to inform him if *Hashem* answered his prayer or not!

Rashi therefore first explained that "*nah*" doesn't mean "immediately" but it is rather an expression of *derech erez*. After we understand that, *Rashi* was able to explain that the word, "saying" means that

Moshe asked *Hashem* to inform him if his prayer was answered or not.

The second explanation why *Rashi* explained the *possuk* out of order is built on two other difficulties in this *possuk*. Firstly, if a person asks something from a king or any other important person he doesn't add to the request that he should tell him if that person is planning to answer his request or not. The normal way things are done is that after a person makes his request he waits and hopes for the best. .

Secondly, it is written in the *Gemorro Berachos* 24b a person who raises his voice when he *davvens* is acting like a false prophet (who at the time of *Eliyahu Hanavi* yelled out to their *Avodah Zarah* to answer their prayers). What then does it mean that *Moshe* cried out to *Hashem*?

He answers this second question in light of what is written in *Shulchan Aruch* that even though generally speaking one should not *davven* out loud if he is doing so for the benefit of others that they will learn from him how to *davven* it is permitted.

Therefore since *Moshe* *davvened* out loud in order that *Bnei Yisroel* will learn to precede their prayers with two or three words of supplication therefore it was permitted for him to *davven* out loud.

Why however did *Moshe* choose to teach this *halacha* specifically now when he *davvened* for *Miriam* and not at some other time?

This question he answers in light of the *Medrash* that the reason that *Moshe's tefillah* for *Miriam* was so short, only five words, was because *Moshe* was concerned that if he would *davven* a long *tefillah* *Bnei Yisroel* would complain that the only reason

that he *davvened* so long was because she was his sister and he cared for her more than he cared for the rest of *Bnei Yisroel* and if he would have *davvened* for someone else he would have *davvened* much quicker. *Moshe* therefore *davvened* quickly and, *Zera Shimshon* adds, he also *davvened* out loud to publicize to everyone that he *davvened* short.

Moshe never *davvened* out loud to teach *Bnei Yisroel* to precede their prayers with a few words of supplication because *Moshe* was concerned that the people will erroneously conclude that it is always permitted to *davven* out loud and they would not realize that *Moshe* did this only because he wanted to teach them to precede their prayers with a few nice words. However since he now had to *davven* out loud so they would not suspect him of favoritism toward his sister he also choose to teach them the proper way to word a prayer.

Moshe Rabainu wasn't one hundred percent sure that even to take away their suspicion outweighed his concern that people will learn from him that in any situation one can *davven* out loud. Therefore after he *davvened* out loud for *Miriam* he asked *Hashem* to tell him if *Hashem* answered his prayer. His question was essentially if he did the right thing and therefore he doesn't have to continue to *davven* for her, or did he do the wrong thing and therefore he will *davven* again.

Rashi therefore waited to explain that the word, "saying" means that *Moshe* asked *Hashem* to tell him if his prayer was accepted after he explained that *Moshe* *davvened* out loud to teach *Bnei Yisroel* to precede a request with two or three words of supplicants because without knowing this one would

think that *Moshe* acted with *chutzpa* by immediately asking if *Hashem* accepted his prayer. It is only after we understand that *Moshe's davvening* out loud was not so simple can we understand that it wasn't

chutzpa to ask if *Hashem* answered his prayer but he was really asking *Hashem* if he did the right thing and he should leave things alone the way they are or should he *davven* again

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וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהָרַר דְּרָרָה שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְאַרְוֹן בְּרִית יְדוּד נִסְעָה לְפָנֵיהֶם דְּרָרָה שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לְתוֹר לְהֵם מְנוּחָה :
וְעַנּוּ יְדוּד עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בְּנִסְעָם מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה :וַיְהִי בְנִסְעָה הָאֵרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוֹמָה יְדוּד וַיִּפְצוּ אִיבֵיךָ וַיִּנְסוּ
מִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ :וּבְנַחְהָ יֹאמֶר שׁוּבָה יְדוּד רַבּוֹת אֶלְפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל :וַיְהִי הָעָם כְּמִתְאַנְנִים רַע בְּאַזְנֵי יְדוּד
וַיִּשְׁמַע יְדוּד וַיַּחַר אַפּוֹ וַתִּבְעַר בָּם אֵשׁ יְדוּד וַתֹּאכַל בְּקִצָּה הַמַּחֲנֶה :וַיִּצְעַק הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל מֹשֶׁה
אֶל יְדוּד וַתִּשְׁקַע הָאֵשׁ :וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמְּקוֹם הַהוּא תִבְעָרָה כִּי בְעָרָה בָּם אֵשׁ יְדוּד :וְהֵאֱסַפְסַף אֶשֶׁר בְּקִרְבּוֹ
הַתְּאֵזוּ תֵּאָוֶה וַיִּשְׁבוּ וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִי יֹאכְלֵנוּ בָּשָׂר :בַּמַּדְבָּר יִלְג־לוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר א-ד

It is written in this week's *parsha*. "They traveled away from the Mountain of *Hashem* a distance of three days. The Ark of the Covenant of *Hashem* traveled in front of them a three days journey to seek out a resting place for them. *Hashem's* cloud kept above them by day, as they moved on from camp. When the Ark began to travel, *Moshe* said: "Advance, *Hashem* and let Your enemies be scattered, and Your foes flee before You!" And when it rested, he would say: "Return, *Hashem*, and dwell among the myriads and thousands of *Israel*. You on *Israel's* myriads of thousands!" And the people acted like complainers in the ears of *Hashem*. *Hashem* heard and was angered and a fire of *Hashem* broke out against them, ravaging the edge of the camp. The people cried out to *Moshe*. *Moshe* prayed to *Hashem* and the fire died down. He named that place *Tavairah* because a fire of

Hashem broke out against them. The rabble in their midst cultivated a craving, and *Bnei Yisroel* also wept and said, "Who will feed us meat?" (Bamidbar 10/33-36, 11/1-4)"

A lot transpired in these eight *pesukim*. *Bnei Yisroel* left *Har Hashem*. The people complained to *Hashem* and as a punishment *Hashem* brought a fire on the edge of the camp. The rabble in their midst had a tremendous craving to eat meat and complained to *Hashem*.

In the middle of the *Torah* relating all of these events, the *Torah* tells us that when *Bnei Yisroel* would travel in the Desert from place to place, and the *Aron* began to move, *Moshe* prayed that *Hashem* should destroy and scatter all of their enemies.

Chazal (*Shabbos* 115a) ask; mentioning *Moshe's* prayer when the *Aron* moved and rested is

completely out of place. It would be more fitting for the *Torah* to mention it in *Parshas Bamidbar* when the *Torah* describes how *Bnei Yisroel* journeyed.

One explanation is given by the *Gemara*; *Moshe's* prayer is specifically mentioned here to, "Separate between the narrative of the first calamity and the narrative of the second calamity." The *Gemara* asks, what is the second calamity? "And the people acted like complainers". The *Gemara* continues and asks, what is the first calamity? "They traveled away from the Mountain of *Hashem* a distance of three days". *R' Chama* the son of *R' Chanina* explains that this means *Bnei Yisroel* turned away from *Hashem*. (*Mesechta Shabbos* 115a)

A second explanation is given by *Rashi*; the first calamity was the wrongdoing of "traveling away from the Mountain of *Hashem* a distance of three days". The wrongdoing was not the traveling itself, but rather it refers to "The rabble in their midst cultivated a craving, and *Bnei Yisroel* also wept and said, "Who will feed us meat?" written seven *pessukim* later.

Zera Shimshon quotes the *Ramban* who asks on *Rashi*, who explains the calamity was "the rabble in their midst..." since this is written after "And the people complained..." How can *Chazal* refer to it as the "first calamity"?

Secondly, *Zera Shimshon* himself asks, why did the *Gemara* explain the second calamity was before the first one? When there are two unknowns it is more accepted to explain the first unknown and then the second.

Zera Shimshon explains the key to answer these two questions is to properly understand why *Bnei*

Yisroel chose to specifically complain about the fact that they cannot eat meat. Why was this so important to *Bnei Yisroel*?

Zera Shimshon answers that from the time *Bnei Yisroel* received the *Torah* at *Har Sinai*, *Bnei Yisroel* were prohibited to eat regular slaughtered meat and were only allowed to eat from the remaining meat of an animal that part of it was sacrificed on the *Mizbayach* as a *korban* (sacrifice) and part was given to the *Kohanim*.

The reason for this is that eating too much meat causes one to follow his *yetzer hora* and to disconnect oneself from *Hashem* as the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 32a) explains with a *moshol*, "A lion only roars when he eats a basket full of meat!"

However, since a large part of the meat of a *korban* is used for *mitzvos*, the remaining meat of a *korban* does not stimulate the *yetzer hora* to such a degree.

The *Zera Shimshon* explains; *Bnei Yisroel* craved to eat regular meat because they wanted to disconnect themselves from *Hashem*, but they didn't have the strength to do this. Therefore they desired meat which would put them in the hands of the *Yetzer Hora* and then they would be able to go through with their sinful intentions.

The sin of "running away from *Har Sinai*" and "the rabble who asked for meat" are really the same sin; the desire to distance themselves from *Hashem*.

We can understand why the *Gemara* considers the sin of the rabble "the first calamity" since it was a continuation and completion of the sin of running away from *Har Sinai*, and not an independent and isolated misdeed.

This is also the reason the *Gemara* first asked "what was the second calamity," before what was

first one, because even though it was written
second, it was a part of the first misdeed

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וְיִהְיֶה אֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ טְמָאִים לְנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַפֶּסַח בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּקְרְבוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְפָנָיו
אֶהְרֹן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (במדבגר ט/ו)

“There were men who were *tamei* [because of contact with] a dead person, and were not able to make the *Pesach* sacrifice on that day. So they approached Moses and Aaron on that day. (*Bamidbar* 9/6) *Rashi* asks, why did the people who were *Tamei* approach *Aharon* in addition to *Moshe*? If *Moshe* didn't know the *Halacha* how could *Aharon* know it?

Rashi explains that *Moshe* and *Aharon* were both sitting together in the *Bais Medrash* and the people who were *Tamei* asked both of them at the same time.

Zera Shimshon asks; there is another time that a *Halacha* was asked to someone in addition to *Moshe*. Concerning *Bnos Tzlafchad* it says, "They stood before *Moshe* and before *Elazar* the *Kohen* and before the leaders and the entire congregation..."

There, though, *Rashi* gives two explanations; either they were both together (like he explains here) or they first asked *Elazar* and then *Moshe*.

Why then, asks *Zera Shimshon*, didn't *Rashi* mention this explanation here; that they first asked *Aharon* what they should do, and when he didn't know, they asked *Moshe*?

Zera Shimshon answers that when *Bais Din* gives permission for a *Rav* to *pasken* the permission isn't necessarily all-inclusive. They can give permission to *pasken* only ritual laws and not monetary laws or they can give permission to *pasken* monetary laws but not ritual laws.

In *Parshas Yisro* we only find that *Yisro* advised *Moshe* to appoint others to lighten his work load concerning money matters. We don't find, that *Yisro* suggested that *Moshe* appoint others to *pasken* ritual laws.

According to this we can now understand why *Rashi* didn't explain that concerning the *Korban Pesach* they first asked *Aharon* and then *Moshe*. The laws of *Korban Pesach* are ritual laws and no one except for *Moshe* was allowed to *pasken* them.

On the other hand, *Bnos Tzlafchad* asked laws that concerned inheritance, which are monetary laws. *Moshe* gave others the permission to *pasken* these types of laws, just as *Yisro* suggested, and therefore it is possible that they asked *Elazar* first and then *Moshe*!

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HaRav Shimshon Nachmani, author of *Zera Shimshon* lived in Italy about 300 years ago in the time of the *Or HaChaim HaKodesh*.

The Chida writes that he was a great *Mekubal* and wrote many *sefarim* including *sefarim* about "practical *kabbolo*" and asked that all of his *sefarim* be buried after he passes away except for *Zera Shimshon* and *Niflaos Shimshon* on *Avos*.

HaRav Shimshon Nachmani had one child who died in his lifetime (hence the name "*Zera Shimshon*") and in the preface he promises for people who learn his *sefarim* after he dies "... And your eyes will see children and grandchildren like the offshoots of an olive tree around your tables, wise and understanding with houses filled with all manner of good things... and wealth and honor..."

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