



**מרדכי מלכא**

**רב ואב"ד עיה"ק אלעד ת"ו**

**יו"ר ועדת סת"ם העולמית**

**הרבנות הראשית לישראל**

**לשכת הרבנות הראשית אלעד. ראש העין. הרצליה**

**בד"צ אלעד\*בתי הוראה\*שרותי דת\*רישום נישואין\*כשרות\*מקואות\*עירובין**

**The office of Rabanoot Eled – in hesd of Rabbi MORDECHAI MALKA**

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## Parashat Bamidbar

### Meriting the Torah and the dwelling of the Shechinah depends on the virtue of humility:

Bamidbar 1:1 “The Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Ohel Moed on the first day of the second month, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt, saying.”

As the Tanna in Pirkei Avot states 1:1 “Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua, Yehoshua to the elders, and the elders to the Nevi'im, and the Nevi'im to the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah. They said three things: Be patient in [the administration of] justice, raise many disciples and make a fence around the Torah”.

### Questions:

1. It is necessary to examine why the Torah says that Hashem spoke to him in the wilderness of Sinai and why was it not enough to say “and Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Ohel Moed”?
2. Another question arises regarding the phrasing of the Tanna. “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai” Moses received the Torah from Hashem and not from Sinai. Wouldn't it seem more appropriate to write on Mount Sinai?

### Mans Way:

When we look at human nature, we notice wealthy people who boast to others, as well as heroes about their strength and wise men about their wisdom. This is what the prophet Yirmiyahu said: 9:22: Thus saith Hashem: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; (23) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands, and knows Me, that I am Hashem who exercises mercy, justice, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, says Hashem.” The human error stems from a sense of greatness achieved by power and effort, wealth, might or wisdom, which can cause a feeling of advantage over others, but the truth is that everything is from G-d Almighty for the sole purpose of fulfilling our mission in this world. It does not depend on the person and his actions. As long as a person doesn't reach this realization the whole point is missed, when he doesn't acknowledge the goodness of the creator, consequently he behaves proudly and becomes despicable in the eyes of Hashem. This is the Navi's demand, “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands, and knows Me.” When it is known that everything is from Hashem, we will do HaShem's will to do charity, kindness, and justice, and only then will we be loved before Hashem and the gifts we receive are fulfilled.

### Maran HaChida explains the sign that when the Jewish people leave Egypt, they will serve Hashem on Har Sinai is:

This will explain the above questions. Maran HaChida explains that the Tana did not mean to teach us how the Torah was given from one to another since we can learn all this from the Torah and the Nevi'im. Instead, it teaches us a tremendous and vital foundation for how Moshe received the Torah and the leadership of Bnei Israel. Maran HaChida in his book “Ptach Einayim” explains why when G-d wanted to send Moshe to be the leader of the people of Israel, Moshe refused and argued with G-d until Hashem



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was furious and angry with Moshe so to speak. On the other hand, at the time of receiving the Torah, when Hashem instructed Moshe to go up to Har Sinai to receive the Torah, we did not find any argument or refusal whatsoever, but he immediately ascended the mountain for forty days and forty nights to accept it, why didn't he refuse here as before? This is what the Chida asks, and the Chida explains that Moshe Rabbeinu did not consider himself worthy of redeeming and leading the Jewish people, so he refused and argued and didn't agree to be the emissary, but Hashem convinced Moshe that this specifically made him worthy of receiving the Torah. As it is written (Shmot 3: 12) And God said, "I will be with you. This will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." The question arises, in fact, how did this convince Moshe? The answer lies in the wording of the pasuk, "This will be the sign to you," The sages say that when Hashem wanted to give the Torah, he asked which mountain to give it on, and then all the mountains turned to Him. According to the pasuk in Tehillim it can be explained, "Why do you lurk, you lofty mountains?" Since Mount Sinai saw itself as low, it did not open its mouth against the other mountains, and when Hashem saw this, He said that precisely because Mount Sinai saw itself as short and small, the Torah would be given on it. This is how Hashem convinced Moshe that Hashem's behavior is the opposite of man's leadership, that people always look at the status of a person in a society based on his role and his responsibilities, but by Hashem, the leadership is entirely different. Therefore, because Moshe sees himself as low and unworthy, it is he whom Hashem chose for the leadership and the Torah, so he said to Moshe, "This is the sign for you," which is a sign for you and to you. So when Hashem approached him to come up to accept the Torah Moshe did not refuse since he understood that all the more so, Hashem considers where to give the Torah based on whether the ground humiliates itself or boasts, then a person even more so must understand that it is the way of Hashem to give the Torah to the most humble and modest man, and that is His will.

### Humility as a mean of earning Torah:

From here we will learn that this is the key to earning the Torah and this is the message that the Tanna tells us when he elaborates on how Moshe received the Torah from Sinai, meaning that he learned from Mount Sinai. The Mishna continues "and passed it on to Yehoshua," Why Yehoshua? Since Yehoshua saw himself as a slave and cleaned the Beit Midrash and arranged the benches of the Beit Midrash even though he learned Torah from Moshe Rabbeinu himself, he served him and behaved humbly and saw himself no more than a servant in the Beit Midrash. The same applies to all generations to come of recipients of the Torah. We must learn from this a general morality regarding each and every one, that if one prides himself on something Hashem gave him, it is said "He and I cannot dwell together in the world" Therefore we must learn a fundamental value that everything a person has it is all from Hashem, for He is the one who gives strength to do good, wealth, wisdom and understanding. That is why Moshe, who reached this high level of recognition, was the most humble man who walked on the face of the earth. It is like a bank clerk in the commercial department, who handles enormous sums of money in a single day, yet he will never get a feeling of "I am a millionaire," he will always feel that it is not his to spend or even think he is a rich man. And so almost everyone will understand. However, people who were blessed with wisdom or wealth or bravery usually will not feel like this bank clerk, but on the contrary they will think it's their own and they worked for it, but Moshe felt and realized that everything he has is not his and he felt humbled and modest and achieved the virtue of humility. Hence, the Tanna opened with this to instruct us about the



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key to success in life; we should all strive to instill in our hearts that we have nothing of our own. Then we'll be blessed with success in life in every aspect, in all relations and with spirituality.

### Explaining the verse in the Parashah:

This is the meaning of the verse, Torah intends to teach us how Moshe merited that God spoke to him because he behaved in such a manner like a desert and Har Sinai, as it is written, and Moshe the man is more humble than any man on the face of the earth.

### The Tanna statement "And hate the Rabbinat":

Now we'll understand the words of the Tanna in Pirkei Avot 1:10: "Shemaiah and Avtalyon received from them, Shmaya says, love the work, and hate the Rabbinat, and do not become familiar with the authority" And one might ask the whole Torah is held up by the sages and the rabbis, surely without the rabbis there would be no continuation and observance of the Torah, so how can one say "and hate the Rabbinat"? In my book on Pirkei Avot I explained that in order to understand the Tanna's intention one must reflect on Hashem's behavior and management how he directs a person to a particular position and when he'll realize that the whole purpose of his job is to correct what needs correction, so it is incumbent upon him to not take advantage of his position and the power in his state but to behave respectfully because the purpose of his position is not to enjoy power and to exercise authority over others. Therefore the intention of the Tanna "and hate the Rabbinat" was the arrogance that exists in every role and position both in the Rabbinat and in any position that has power, since the purpose is not to rebel and to rule over others but to fulfill his mission in this world, and when he prides himself over others, he misses the purpose of his job and mission in this world. This was learned from Yosef Hatzadik, who was a king and heard ten times "your servant our father" and the translation, and therefore he was punished, and his life got shortened a year for every word he heard in his father's disgrace. Even more so we should learn about others that if Yosef that had no choice because he wanted to hide his identity and was bound to hear his father's disgrace because of his job, was punished because perhaps he should've discovered his identity and not hear his fathers contempt, even more so for those who take advantage of their role to underestimate and hurt people who are beneath them or in need. And it is also a recipe for shortening days, As Chazal say in Tractate Pesachim 87:2: Rabbi Yohanan said to her, "O woe to the Rabbinat, who buried her husbands, that you have no prophet and prophet who has not lost four kings in his days. They also said in tractate Yoma 64:2: And the Authority buried its owner. Therefore, the Tanna warns the Rabbinat to refer to the authority in his position, but there is no doubt that there is no prohibition against behaving in a rabbinat that, on the contrary, can merit the many, and when the greats of the world have always led the people of Israel. In addition, the Chafetz Chaim adds that honor can lose a person all of his Olam Haba, since honor is spiritual, since there is nothing physical about it, and it is an entirely spiritual pleasure, so it is at the expense of his reward in the world to come.

### A story that transpired by Maran Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, zt"l about "Moshe was very humble":

An instance that occurred during my meeting with Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, zt " I remember it being my last visit before he was hospitalized for the last time, I prayed with him, and after the prayer he called me to his room, he had a custom that when he wanted to ask or comment he would tell a story or a Chiddush and



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he asked me: the Torah says “and Moshe the man is more humble than any man on the face of the earth” to teach us that this is the height of humility, and here in Pirkei Avot chapter 4 Mishnah 4 Rabbi Levitas of Yavneh says “be exceedingly (me’od me’od) humbly spirited, for the end of man is the worm”. To teach us how much we need to avoid the feeling of pride, and he asked how is it possible to ask every person to be exceedingly (me’od me’od) humble when Torah says about Moshe that he was just very (me’od) humble. Isn’t he more humble than any man on the face of the earth? The Torah teaches that after the general rule, even if they reached a very high level, Moshe Rabbeinu came to the third level (me’od the third time) more than all of creation. He concluded with this: “ you follow Moshe’s path, and therefore I ask you to agree to what the chairman of the movement wants, etc”.

### The Zohar:

The Zohar in our Parasha explains that there are two parts that can not be separated. The first one in the Sinai Desert, which is the acceptance of the Torah and the second is the Ohel Mo’ed, the resting of the Shechina in Bnei Israel. It is possible to add in this way that in fact, Hashem dwells the Shechina precisely when man becomes like the Sinai desert, which is the symbol of humility and humbleness , only then may he be a Mishkan and the Divine Presence can dwell in His home, as our sages say: “A man and a woman who merits the Shechina dwells among them” which is dependent on their shalom bait and their humbleness and selflessness. Then they are worthy of transforming their house into an Ohel Mo’ed, for if there is only Torah and there is no virtue, there is no Divine Presence.

### A story that occurred with the Vizhnitz Rebbe:

After the Six-Day War in 5767 (1967), the Western Wall was returned to Israel, and the entrance to the Western Wall was opened with great joy. When the Vizhnitz Rebbe reached the Western Wall, he said that the sages said that the Shechina did not move away. He who wishes to feel the Shechina needs to be a KOTEL (a wall) acronym of the verse “Venafshi Keaafar Lakol Tihyeh [and my soul as dust for all will be]”, for Hashem, does not dwell with an arrogant person, and only those who have the trait of humility are able to feel the dwelling of the Shechinah, as cited in the book of “Ma’asehen Shel Tzaddikim”.

### A story that occurred with Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz about “my soul as dust to all will be”:

Once Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz was required to stay during the High Holidays in a foreign city. Of course, it was very difficult for him, and he was worried about the prayers where he would pray on these holy days. He had no choice but to pray in the synagogue and try to find a suitable place for him to pray. As he was looking around, he saw an old man sitting and praying with great Kavanah. He decided to sit next to him, that old man prayed in a way that anyone next to him could listen to his prayer. Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz heard how he poured out his heart in his prayer in particular, when he said, “My soul as dust for all shall be” adding and lengthening in his prayer for humility. Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz was pleased he found such a wonderful place to pray on Yom Kippur. After the prayer during the Torah reading, the Gabbai honored the important people of the community. For the third Aliya, the Gabbai called on someone else and then honored the old man with the fourth Aliya. Suddenly the same old man started shouting at the Gabbai that he should be ashamed, how dare he call him to the fourth Aliya, and not to the third Aliya which is more honorable [especially in Ashkenazi custom] and how he honored a simple man with the third Aliya and



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not him. He was so upset that he refused to get an Aliya entirely and he returned to his seat. Rabbi Yonatan was shocked. How is this man, who prayed with such Kavanah and with such humbleness and humility, so angry about a meager formality? After the prayer, Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz gently approached The old man and asked him how it could be that on the one hand, he heard him compare himself to dust out of humbleness and yet now he is upset about the third or fourth Aliya? "I don't understand your question replied the old man. During the prayer, I'm addressing Hashem, and before Him, I am dust and ashes but in this case, I was addressing people, and the man who received the third Aliya is like ashes compared to me! How dare this brazen Gabbai behave so recklessly.

### A story with the Rambam and the humble priest:

There is a story about a priest who lived in the Rambam's time, with all his status, behaved with humility toward each person in an unusual manner, and the rumor spread. The Rambam heard about him, and it was hard for him to believe. He went to see for himself, the Rambam found it difficult to believe that a priest would behave with such humility, so he tried to stay with him for another couple of days in order to test him if it was real humility. To his surprise, this was his habit throughout his stay with him. When the Rambam decided to leave, the priest accompanied him a long way. Suddenly the Rambam turned to him and said that The humility that he had witnessed by the priest is extremely rare. On the other hand, Torah states the Moshe Rabbeinu was the most humble man on earth. Is it possible that the priest is worthy of that title as well? The priest agreed and said that he himself had the same question. At this point, the Rambam realised that it was all a facade in order to gain appreciation. This is humility that comes from haughtiness.

### The Moral:

We've seen and learned that although we all say "My soul as dust for all shall be" but the question remains do we actually mean it? Or after reciting these words, do we still take great offence if it seems someone may have slightly insulted us? In order to merit and be a true vessel for Hashem's immense bounty in Torah, wealth, strength and health we must be authentically humble and internalise that everything, absolutely everything is from Hashem almighty and belongs to him alone. We are simple, like clerks with a property that isn't ours. The tools that Hashem has bestowed on us are in order for us to fulfil our purpose and constantly thank Hashem. By this, we shall merit Torah, wealth, and honer, and the Shechina will dwell in our homes and in Am Israel Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka