



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת וארא

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה'. וְאָרָא אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּקֹל שְׁקִי וְשְׁמִי ה' לֹא נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם. וְגַם הִקְמַתִי אֶת בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם וכו'. (שמות ו, ב-ד)

Hashem spoke to Moshe and said to him, "I am Hashem. I appeared to Avrohom, to Yitzchok, and to Yakov as Kel Shakai, but through My Name Hashem I did not become known to them. And I also established my covenant with them ..." (Shemos 6:2-4)

This week's *Sidrah* begins with Hashem's rebuke of Moshe Rabbeinu, who expressed doubt about Hashem's delay in saving the Bnei Yisroel from the harsh labour in Mitzrayim. Rashi cites Chazal, who explain that Hashem (in *pesukim* 3-4) reprimanded Moshe for another fault. In last week's *parshah*, when Hashem sent Moshe to inform the people about their liberation, Moshe asked, וַאֲמָרוּ לִי מָה, שְׁמוֹ, 'If they say to me, What is His Name, what shall I say to them?' (3:13) Hashem now rebuked Moshe, saying: "Woe! For those who are lost and cannot be found! I have good reason to mourn the death of the Avos. Many times, I revealed Myself to them as Kel Shakai, yet they never asked Me, 'What is Your Name?'; but you questioned me about My Name."

This rebuke requires clarification. When Moshe inquired about Hashem's Name, he sought to understand the depth of Hashem's essence as expressed in His Holy Name. Why was Moshe criticised for his desire to gain a deeper understanding of Hashem's wondrous workings and methods? Furthermore, if his request was indeed inappropriate, why was it granted, with Hashem replying: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה, אֲהַקֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהַקֶּה, וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲהַקֶּה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם, *Hashem answered Moshe, "I Shall Be What I Shall Be." And He said, "So shall you say to the Bnei Yisroel, 'I Shall Be has sent me to you.' "* (3:14). If this knowledge was wrongly called for, why did Hashem share it?

R' Leib *zatza*, in Meorei Sheorim, presents a concept from the Balei Mussar that sheds light on this topic. The Gemara (*Berachos* 17a) states: תְּשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים - תְּכִלִּית חֲכָמָה - מְרַגְּלָא בְּפוּמִיָּה דְּרַבָּא: תְּכִלִּית חֲכָמָה - תְּשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, *There was a familiar lesson in the mouth of Rava: The purpose of wisdom is (to inspire with it) teshuvah and good deeds, as the possuk (Tehilim 111:10) states, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Hashem."* This teaching emphasises that all the vast worlds of knowledge and wisdom do not possess inherent value. Even the loftiest concepts are only worthwhile to initiate something greater: improving one's behaviour and deepening one's relationship with Hashem.

R' Yeruchom of Mir was known to say that every piece of information taught by the Torah serves a purpose, either to convey a fact or impart a lesson. He even referenced the Rambam (unknown source), noting that if one comes across any piece of knowledge in Chazal that seemingly lacks a purpose apart from providing knowledge for its own sake, he must be mistaken in his understanding of it. Knowledge that does not assist a person in fulfilling his Divine mission, as guided by the Torah and the ways of Hashem, is inconsequential and holds no value. In this context, R' Yeruchom would remark, "If someone were to ask me whether there is life on planet Mars, I would say it is certainly

possible. There may be life, perhaps even beings who have received Torah from Heaven. However, it is entirely irrelevant to us. If it were significant, we would find references to it in the Torah or Chazal!"

The Gemara (*Nedarim* 22b) further teaches: אֲלֵמָּלָא חָטְאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹא נִתֵּן לָהֶם אֶלָּא חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, *Had Klal Yisroel not sinned, they would have been given only the Five Books of the Torah and the Book of Yehoshua... What is the source indicating this? For with much wisdom is much anger (Ecclesiastes 1:18).* The wealth of wisdom found in the rest of Nach is indicative of the great anger that Klal Yisroel aroused in Hashem.

The Rosh (*ibid.*) derives from this Chazal an incredible insight. The extensive teachings of Torah found in Nach would have been unnecessary had Klal Yisroel not sinned. If they had not fallen from their spiritual level, they could have attained the same *madreigos* with a more abridged version of the Torah. We would not have needed the visions of Ma'aseh Merkavah described by Yechezkel, nor would we have required the profound wisdom of Shlome HaMelech. Even the beautiful praises and songs of Dovid would not have been needed. This raises the question: What is the connection between Tehillim and Mishlei, and the sins of the nation? The explanation lies in the fact that as a person becomes more distanced from his Source - Hashem - he requires more understanding and explanations to inspire him to return. If Klal Yisroel had never fallen in spiritual level, they would not have needed the additional guidance provided by these later teachings to bring them back to Hashem. The basic wisdom presented in the Five Books of Torah would have sufficed.

With this background, R' Leib clarifies what Moshe's request to know Hashem's Name signifies. He explains that the Torah was not revealed to the Avos; rather, as Chazal teach, they learned Torah independently. They did not require a profound understanding of Hashem to serve Him. This does not indicate any deficiency on their part; instead, their service was complete with Hashem's revelations at a smaller scale, without the need for additional knowledge. However, during the later generations of Moshe and the Bnei Yisroel, a deeper level of understanding was necessary to inspire the nation to appreciate Hashem's immense *hashgachah*. Therefore, Moshe's request to reveal Hashem's Name to the people is viewed negatively as it reflected a decline from the spiritual level of the Avos. At that time, given that the Bnei Yisroel needed this additional knowledge to motivate them, Hashem expressed sorrow over the loss of the Avos, who were on a greater spiritual plane.

Rav Dessler explains that some people attribute their lack of devotion to Hashem to their inability to comprehend the ways of Hashem. They argue that if they only had insight into the secret workings of the Upper Worlds, they would be more successful in serving Hashem. However, R' Dessler asserts that this reasoning is fundamentally flawed. A person can witness the greatest miracles and possess the loftiest levels of knowledge yet still remain sinful. This idea is illustrated by Pharaoh, who, despite witnessing incredible miracles and revelations from Hashem, continued to act wickedly. Thus, more knowledge does not automatically make a person better.

We learn a profound lesson: the wisdom and knowledge we acquire only hold value if they contribute to our spiritual growth. Knowledge alone does not make a person better; it is essential to draw the right lessons to improve oneself. Let us strive to use the great wisdom of the Torah to inspire us to live lives more devoted to its teachings and connected to Hashem!

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