

Haazenu: Direct Line to Hashem (תשפ"א)

R' Chananya Berzon

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר: עֲלֵה אֶל־הַר הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה הַר־נֹבֵד אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יְרֵחוֹ וּרְאֵה אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶחְזָהּ: וּמִתְּבוֹהַר אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹלֶה שָׁמָּה וְהֶאֱסֹף אֶל־עַמִּיךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר־מֵת אַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ בְּהַר הָהָר וַיֵּאֱסֹף אֶל־עַמִּיו (Devarim 32: 48-50)

God spoke to Moshe Rabbeinu, "In this mid-day; bright, shining, and visible to everyone, I want you to ascend this mountain ... and you will die on this mountain"

There is a very famous Rashi that appears on these posukim, where Rashi mentions the three places the Torah uses the terminology "בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה," in mid-day. The first was in Berieshet, when Noach was building his teiva; the people of his generation knew why the ark was building, and still they declared, "If something truly happens, we're going to come with our utensils and we will beat Noach, destroying his ark!" Hashem responded to their declaration, "Wait and see - that will NOT happen."

The second, Mitzraim. As the Jews planned their exodus, the Egyptians proclaimed, "If the Jews dare to do anything, we will combat their uprising with swords and knives, destroying the Jewish people!" There, Hakadosh Baruch Hu responded to their outburst, "Wait and see - what you say, it's NOT going to happen."

The third instance is here in our posuk, and I'd like to paraphrase Rashi who explains here that the Jewish people said, "If we will feel that Moshe Rabbeinu will be taken away from us, we aren't going to let it happen! This is the man who took us out of Egypt, who split the sea, brought down the manna, brought the quail, and who brought us the water from the wells; he gave us the Torah. We're not going to let go of him!" Hashem responded, "Wait and see - in the middle of the day I'm taking him away."

The question is somewhat obvious - how can you compare the generation of Noach and the people of Mitzrayim, to the Jewish people who want to prevent Moshe's death? Noach's generation and the Egyptians were rishaim, evil-doers, attempting to stop something positive; whereas with Moshe Rabbeinu, it seems as if the 'belligerent' ones are truly righteous and positive individuals! They appreciate what Moshe did for them, and they *just* want his continued leadership; so what is happening here?

I think the answer is that the Jewish people made a mistake in relating to Moshe Rabbeinu. Regardless of how great Moshe was, and how caring he was for Klal Yisrael, it was a mistake, a misapprehension, or even a misidentity!

Moshe was not the one due all the credit, it was the Ribbono Shel Olam! Moshe didn't cause the things that Bnei Yisrael listed, it was the handiwork of God! Moshe Rabbeinu was the caring for truth intermediary, the shaliach. He was the agent, the advocator, the go-between for Am Yisrael, but it is Hashem who rules the world.

On a more blatant and obvious level, the rishaim in the episodes of both Noach and the Ark, and in the Exodus from Egypt, should have realized that their rebellious actions would have been to no avail. In a simplistic fashion, the motives to protect or protest the death of Moshe have a positive aspect to them, but the operating factor continues to remain - if Hakadosh Baruch Hu is removed from the narrative of Am Yisrael's fate, then their arrival in the Holy Land is doomed to from the start.

Irrespective of how caring Moshe Rabbeinu is and was to Klal Yisrael, and how important he made them feel, the fact remains that it is always the Ribbono Shel Olam running the show!

After laying down the format for Teshuva in Halacha Aleph, the Rambam in Hilchot Teshuvot Halacha Bet writes that in the times of the Kohein Gadol's service in the Beit Hamikdash, their avoda on Yom Kippur was to bring atonement for Klal Yisrael. This was done through the act of bringing the Sair La'azazel, the he-goat thrown off the cliff-side, and through the viduy confession of the Kohein Gadol, recited with each and every one of the Jewish people in mind. But yet, after explaining this process in detail for a few lines, the Rambam asserts that this intensive avoda process of the Kohein Gadol is dependant on the singular condition that all of Klal Yisrael individually did teshuva; if the teshuva is missing, then the Sair goat is not going to be michappar and atone for all sins.

The Kohein Gadol throughout the times of both Batei Mikdash personified Moshe Rabbeinu; they were the emissary, the shaliach, but each individual yachid remains as the one who needs to establish the direct connection with the Borei Olam.

Direct line to the Ribbono Shel Olam. And with that we will be zoche to have a teshuva sheleima gemura, a complete teshuva, bimheira biyameinu.

Gmar Chatima Tova. Amen!