

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### Hashem's Voice, Spoken

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR  
 ALTER RAUBVOGEL

"When Moshe came to the Sanctuary to speak with [Hashem], he heard the Voice speaking (*midaber*) to him, from above the [cover of the Ark]..." (7:89). According to Rashi, we just mistranslated this verse. The Hebrew word for "speaking" is *m'daber*, with a *schwa* after the first consonant. The Torah, however, says *midaber*, with an "i" sound. Rashi says that word means "being spoken," as if Hashem were speaking to Himself, in Moshe's presence—aloof, the way a king addresses a commoner. Rav Moshe Feinstein (in *Darash Moshe*) asks, doesn't the Torah say that Hashem spoke to Moshe directly, "mouth to mouth" (12:8)? Rav Moshe answers that Hashem did, in fact, speak directly to Moshe. But when He did, He didn't verbalize everything He wanted to convey. Hashem left it to Moshe to consider every nuance of Hashem's words and then come to understand the totality of Hashem's message. This, Rav Moshe says, should be an example to us of the way we should listen to the words of our Sages and teachers. (Case in point: Look at Rashi's attention to detail, as he translates the Torah!)

Rav Moshe says there's another lesson to be learned here. Everything in this world happens because Hashem wills it to happen—says it must happen. As the Talmud puts it, A person doesn't poke his finger upward unless "they" have

proclaimed it up above (*Chullin 7b*). Of course, we're completely unaware of Hashem's proclamations until they come to pass. It's as if Hashem were speaking to Himself. Take the example of Jewish emigration from Europe to the United States. Tens of thousands of people crossed the Atlantic, in the belief that they had chosen to escape persecution and seek better lives. In reality, it was Hashem's decision to send His people here. But who among those huddled masses stopped to consider that, to "hear Hashem's voice, as it was being spoken?" They were, in fact, following Hashem's word! A wise and G-d-fearing person, says Rav Moshe, lives his life—and certainly performs *mitzvos*—with the intention of fulfilling Hashem's will, not his own. It's often impossible to know what Hashem has decreed, but there are times when a plan is obviously about to come into fruition. Those times may be deliberate on our part, like when a bride and groom step under the *chuppah*, or they may come about by other means. Either way, know and feel that you are living out Hashem's will, and receive G-d's blessing. 🕊

### A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Which *mitzvah* expires with age? 🕊

See reverse side for the answer

### A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

The Kollel *yungerlite* (rabbis) are in the process of going through the 39 *melocho*s (activities) which are prohibited on Shabbos. The first of the 39 forbidden labors is *choresh*—plowing. Does the prohibition of *choresh* have any non-farming applications?

The Shabbos labor of *choresh* prohibits one from doing any activity which either prepares or improves the ground for planting. Since most people are not farmers who would understand or appreciate the various aspects of this labor, we shall give a partial, brief, general list of agricultural activities that prepare or improve the soil for planting: loosening the soil, digging holes or making furrows in the soil, leveling the soil so that one is planting on an even surface, fertilizing, weeding, removing stones, watering the soil, etc.

As in all of the forbidden Shabbos labors, the Rabbis prohibited other, related activities because they were concerned that performing them may lead one to transgress the Biblical prohibition itself. Depending on the case, sometimes the restriction applies only to the ground outdoors, while other times *Chazal* felt that the restriction should include indoor flooring as well. The following is a partial list of activities which are restricted because of *choresh Miderabanan*:

- 1) Pulling or dragging heavy items across the ground—since the weight

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

of the objects will inevitably make a furrow in the ground. Pulling or dragging lightweight items which will not inevitably make a furrow in the ground is permitted. Pushing a heavy baby carriage or a wheelchair is also permitted. (See *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchaso* for the explanation 28:42.)

- 2) Playing games which require a ball [or nuts] to be rolled on the ground, such as marbles, soccer, kickball, hockey, and golf. Playing these games can easily result in the player leveling the playing field. According to the *Mishna Brurah* (O.C. 338:20), It is forbidden to play these games even on a paved court.
- 3) Securing a table or a bench to the ground – since it may lead one to level the ground so that the table or bench will stand straight and firm (M.B. 337:20).
- 4) Sweeping a paved or unpaved outdoor courtyard – since it may result in leveling the ground. Sweeping the floor inside the house, however, is permitted nowadays, since all of our homes are floored and there is no issue of leveling the ground (O.C. 337:2 and *Biur Halachah V'yeish*). 🕒

## A LESSON LEARNED

The Shabbos davening in the *Beis Medrash* of the Ger Chasidic dynasty was never one that was rushed, and as the young boy Menachem was getting restless toward the end, he said the silent *mussaf* prayer and slipped out even before the congregation recited the *kedusha* in the *chazzan's* repetition. Menachem figured his father would not notice. When you are the leader of thousands of *chassidim* as the Gerrer Rebbe, as his father was, there has got to be too much on your mind to notice that your son left early davening early. However, after the davening finished, he was in fact told by one of his father's *chassidim* that he was wanted in his father's office. He walked in, and his father asked, "Menachem, do you

know what Hashem's crown looks like?" "No," Menachem responded. His father began to describe a crown in great detail until he said, "But do you know what? There is a diamond missing in Hashem's crown. Do you know that when we say *kedusha* of *mussaf* and we say the words *Kesser Yitnu Lecha*, that to you Hashem we give a crown, we are putting a diamond in Hashem's crown? But today Hashem is missing your diamond in his crown because you were not there to say those words today." 🕒

## RIDDLE ANSWER

One elderly person need not stand for another.  
The mirror of nature is not for the person.



## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

A unique Jew of the 19th century was Adolphus S. Solomons. His feeling of civic responsibility led him to be involved with and lead many projects for the common good, yet he turned down a position as governor of Washington D.C. offered by President Grant because it would require him to work on Shabbos. His family was in the newspaper publishing business in New York, and after a stint in the military and in sales, he opened his own publishing house. While he lived in New York, he was involved in the opening of the Jewish Hospital there and, after moving to Washington D.C., played a part in opening Garfield Hospital, which was created as a memorial to the slain president. There was a myriad of other causes that he was involved in both the Jewish world, such as general agent and director of the American division of the Baron de Hirsch fund, and non-Jewish world, such as sitting on the board of directors for Columbia Hospital for fifty years. Among the most significant was his involvement in the creation of the American Red Cross. In fact, the group that created it, including the famous nurse Civil War nurse Clara Barton, would meet regularly in his home. He was the first vice-president of the organization. Solomons was also a personal friend of President Lincoln and, interestingly, the last picture taken of Lincoln, two weeks before his assassination, was taken in a photo gallery kept by Solomons. Solomons' reminisces of the president are the source for some of the stories that show Lincoln's sense of humor, such as when he told an army officer that handed in his resignation that "I accept your resignation but nothing can compensate me for the loss of you, for when you retire I will then be the ugliest man in the employment of the government." 🕒

SOURCES: Levine, Dr. Yitzchok. "Adolphus S. Solomons: Forgotten 19th Century Communal Activist." Jewish Press. 2013.  
Levine, Dr. Yitzchok. "Adolphus S. Solomons: Friend of President Abraham Lincoln." Jewish Press. 2013.

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