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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת שמות

וַיֵּרָא מִלְאָךְ ה' אֵלָיו בְּלַבַּת אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּינָה, וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּינָה בְּעֵר בָּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּינָה אֵינָנוּ אֶקָּל. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַמִּרְאָה הַגְּדֹל הַזֶּה, מִדּוּעַ לֹא יִבְעַר הַסִּינָה. וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹתַי, וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹקִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּינָה, וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי. (שמות ג, ב-ד)

An angel of Hashem appeared to him in a blaze of fire from amid the bush. He saw and behold! the bush was burning in the fire but the bush was not consumed. Moshe thought, "I will turn aside now and look at this great sight – why will the bush not be burned?" Hashem saw that he turned aside to see; and Hashem called out to him from amid the bush and said, "Moshe, Moshe," and he replied, "Here I am!" (Shemos 3:2-4)

This week's *Sidrah* relates Hashem's first appearance to Moshe Rabbeinu. At the time, Moshe was shepherding his father-in-law's sheep in the wilderness when Hashem led him to the burning bush. The bush was miraculously on fire yet not being consumed. Curious about this extraordinary sight, Moshe turned aside to investigate why the bush was not burning up. Observing how Moshe had turned aside, Hashem called out to him, revealing Himself and commanding Moshe to become the liberator of Klal Yisroel.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* cites a teaching from the Ralbag, who learned an important lesson from this incident. The Ralbag writes that it is fitting for a person to investigate the reasons behind occurrences to the best of their abilities. Through such analysis, one can gain insight into Hashem's ways and understand the methods, order, and sequences in which He governs the world. He derives this from Moshe, who, upon witnessing the unusual sight of a bush burning without being consumed, was immediately inspired to learn the cause of this phenomenon. This was not an isolated occurrence; rather it was part of Moshe's nature to continuously examine and probe all events to uncover the ways of Hashem. This trait enabled him to reach a higher *madreigah* as Hashem revealed Himself only after seeing that Moshe was attentive to this spectacular sight.

Similarly, the Seforno notes that Hashem only revealed Himself to Moshe once He saw that Moshe was investigating the matter. As the Gemara (*Shabbos* 104a) teaches: הַבָּא לִיטְהַר מְסִייעֵין אוֹתוֹ - we extend assistance to one who wishes to purify themselves. After Moshe took the initiative to inquire about the strange holy sight, Hashem reciprocated by making Himself known to him.

The Mishnah (*Pirkei Avos* 2:6) states:

הִלֵּל ... אַף הוּא רָאָה גִלְגֵּלַת אַחַת שְׂצָפָה עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם. אָמַר לָהּ, עַל דְּאֶטְפָּתִי, אֶטְפֹּךְ. וְסוֹף מְטִיפֶיךָ!
!טוֹפִין.

Hillel ... also saw a skull floating on the water; he said to it: "Because you drowned others, they drowned you; and those who drowned you will be drowned eventually."

Rashi (*Sukkah* 53a) explains that Hillel observed a skull belonging to a recognised murderer and remarked aloud about the justice of Divine retribution. In the same cruel and savage manner he had slain others, this killer met his death, and surely his murderers would eventually receive the same punishment. The Toldos Yehoshua explains that Hillel aimed to teach two lessons inspired by this

sight. Firstly, a person gets justice even for actions done to the deceased. Skulls are thrown into the water only after death, and even so, this murderer is held accountable for it, resulting in him receiving the same treatment. Secondly, a person receives punishment for their deeds even after death. Although this murderer was now dead and would receive judgment and due punishment in Olam Habah, he also faced retribution in this world even after death.

The expression of הוא הוּא – he also - requires clarification regarding its intended meaning. The Rosh Yeshiva offers an explanation stating that many people saw the skull drifting on the water, and Hillel was just one among many witnesses to this grim sight. However, only Hillel took the time to reflect on this observation and sought to learn from it. While many individuals may witness remarkable events, very few take the initiative to understand and be inspired by what they see happening around them.

The Lev Eliyohu (Lech Lecha) highlights another example of this concept. The five kings of Sedom, Amarah, Admah, Tzevoim and Bela observed how Avrohom Avinu engaged in battle against Kerdorlaomer and his allies, ultimately defeating them. Despite witnessing Avrohom's miraculous victory with only 318 warriors overpowering vast armies, the kings and the people of Sedom became so wicked and sinful that they deserved total destruction. At the time of Avrohom's incredible triumph, they were so awed by him that they appointed him as their leader (Rashi 14:17). However, just a few years later, they fell into the depths of depravity and immorality. The inspiration they felt from Avrohom's victory was short-lived and had no lasting impact.

We must pay attention to the events and incidents around us in order to understand Hashem's ways. The only way to comprehend Hashem's teachings is by observing what happens in our surroundings and drawing inspiration from those experiences. Moshe paid attention to the burning bush, which awarded him to become Hashem's agent to save Klal Yisroel. Similarly, Hillel noticed something many others overlooked, leading him to learn important lessons about Divine retribution. However, the inspiration we gain can easily fade if we do not make a conscious effort to maintain it. May we be *zoche* to draw inspiration from the events in our lives, resulting in lasting change.

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