

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XXIV: Vayikra (Lev. 1:1–5:26)

Essay 1. Moses' contribution to the Tabernacle

מִדְרָשׁ רַבָּה עַל פְּסוּק "וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה", "יֵשׁ זָהָב וְרַב-פְּנִינִים". הַכֹּל הֵבִיאוּ נְדָבָתָן לְמִשְׁכָּן, "זָהָב", הֲדָא הוּא דְכָתִיב "וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה". "וְרַב-פְּנִינִים", זוּ נְדָבָתָן שֶׁל נְשִׂאִים. "וַיְכַלֵּי יִקְרָא שְׁפָתֵי-דַעַת", לְפִי שְׁהִיְתָה דַעַתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה עֲגוּמָה עָלָיו, אָמַר הַכֹּל הֵבִיאוּ נְדָבָתָן לְמִשְׁכָּן וְאֲנִי לֹא הֵבֵאתִי. אָמַר לוֹ הַקֹּב"ה חֲטִיף שְׁדִיבּוּרָה חֲבִיב עָלַי יוֹתֵר מִן הַכֹּל, שְׁמִכּוֹלָם לֹא קָרָא הַדִּיבּוּר אֶלָּא לְמֹשֶׁה, הֲדָא הוּא דְכָתִיב "וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה" עכ"ל.

There is a **Midrash Lev. Rabbah on the verse, "[The L-rd] called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying"** (Lev. 1:1):

"There is gold, and abundant jewels; but wise speech is a precious object" (Prov. 20:15). **They all brought their donations to the Tabernacle. "Gold", as it is written, "And these are the gifts [that you shall accept from them: gold, silver, and copper]"** (Ex. 25:3). **"And abundant jewels," this was the donation of the princes, as it is written, "And the chieftains brought [onyx and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece]"** (Ex. 35:27). **"But wise speech is a precious object," Moses was despondent, as he said, "Everyone is bringing their donations to the Tabernacle, and I am not bringing [anything]." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, "By your life, your speech is more precious to me than everything, for with all of the others, the [Divine] speech called only Moses, as it is written, "He called to Moses."**

- Lev. Rabbah 1:6

קִשְׁיָה מֵהוּ שְׁדִיבּוּרָה חֲבִיב עָלַי יוֹתֵר מִן הַכֹּל, שְׁנֶאֱמַר "וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה"? אֲדַרְבָּא כָּאֵן הִיָּה הַדִּיבּוּר שֶׁל הַקֹּב"ה שְׁמִדְבָר עִם מֹשֶׁה.

A difficulty is what is this, "Your speech is more precious to me than everything, that it says, "He called to Moses"? To the contrary, here the speech was that of the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who was speaking with Moses. In other words, why did the midrash cite that verse as being illustrative of Moses' speech, when it was G-d speaking and not Moses?

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ואמרין במדרש על פסוק "נצר תאנה יאכל פריה" לפי שנתן משה נפשו על המשכן להראות לכל חכמי לב והנשים שלא יטעו ממה שצוה הקב"ה, לכה נקרא על שמו שנקרא "ויהי ביום כלות משה". וכן בכל דיבור ודיבור שנקרא "כאשר צוה ה' את-משה" עכ"ל.

It says in the midrash (Num. Rabbah 12:9) on the verse, “He who tends a fig tree will enjoy its fruit, and he who cares for his master will be honored” (Prov. 27:18):

Moses gave his soul to the Tabernacle, to show to all those wise of heart¹ and the women² that they shouldn't err [and divert] from what the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded. Thus, his name is used when it is said, “On the day that Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle, he anointed and consecrated it and all its furnishings, as well as the altar and its utensils” (Num. 7:1). Similarly, with each and every speech, for which it is said, “Just as the L-rd had commanded Moses”³ [he repeated G-d's words faithfully, and supervised the people to make sure they fulfilled the instruction without error].

- Num. Rabbah 12:9

וזו היא פוננת המדרש שהדיבור שעשה משה עם כל בעלי המלאכה חביב להקב"ה מכלם, והטעם, כי גדול המעשה יותר מן העושה. ומדד לו מדה כנגד מדה שנתמיד לו לבדו הדיבור תוך המשכן שעשו, כדכתיב "מאהל מועד לאמר". ועוד לאמר משמע לאמר לאחרים והוא סימן לתוכות שלו.

This is the intention of the midrash, that the speech that Moshe made with all the craftsmen is dearer to the Holy One, Blessed be He, than everything, and the reason is, because the deed is greater than the performer of the deed. [G-d] measured [Moses] measure-for-measure, in that he reserved for him alone the [Divine] speech within the Tabernacle that he made, as it is written, “The L-rd called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying” (Lev. 1:1). Also, “saying” has the meaning “to say to others,” and this is a sign of his merit, that Moses faithfully transmitted G-d's word to the people.

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¹ Ex. 36:8, “Then all those wise of heart among those engaged in the work made the tabernacle . . .”

² Ex. 35:25, “And all the women wise of heart spun with their own hands . . .”

³ This appears more than three dozen times in the Torah.