

## Dvar Torah for Pesach

Based on *Likutey Halakhot*, *Hodaah* 6:60; *Bekhor Beheimah Tehorah* 3:4

“On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt; I will slay every first-born in the land...; I will wreak judgement on all the gods of Egypt; I am God.”

(*Exodus* 12:12)

“On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt”—I, and not an angel;

“I will slay every first-born in the land”—I, and not a seraph;

“I will wreak judgement on all the gods of Egypt”—I, and not a deputy;

“I am God”—I, and no other.

(*Passover Hagadah*)

As we read through the Hagadah at the Seder we become aware of something quite curious. Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses our Teacher) is mentioned but once, and only in passing. This is in stark contrast to the story of the Exodus as it is presented in the Torah. From the very moment that Moshe Rabbeinu accepts his being drafted to lead the Jews out of Egypt until their departure, his involvement is total. Again and again Moshe Rabbeinu’s name is mentioned: when Hashem speaks to him, when he meets with the leaders of the Jewish community, when he speaks to Pharaoh in private and at court and when he triggers the plagues. In fact, when Hashem (God) first spoke to Moshe Rabbeinu at the burning bush (*Exodus* 3:4) Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu that his involvement was absolutely necessary. Why, then, is Moshe Rabbeinu absent from the Seder?!

The most ravaging effect of the slavery that we suffered in Egypt was the “exile” of *daat* and *dibur* (awareness and speech). Our spiritual awareness was laid waste, distorted or destroyed. Speech—the ability to express the innermost longing of our soul (*cf. Song of Songs* 5:6)—was ripped from our throats and all we were left with was groans and cries (*Exodus* 2:23). This is why Moshe Rabbeinu had to come to Egypt. He had to teach the Jewish people how to find their way back to God. Those who followed his advice merited receiving the Torah and having the faith of their ancestors restored to them. They merited prayer and seeing miracles upon miracles. Ultimately they merited entering the Land of Israel (*Likutey MoHaran* I, 7).

But who was Moshe Rabbeinu? He hadn’t been in Egypt for at least 65 years. Who knew him? How could he be accepted by people who had never seen and perhaps even never heard of him?! How had the people managed to survive before his arrival?

The Jewish people in Egypt had leadership. Even though the vast majority of Jews were enslaved, the tribe of Levi never suffered that indignity. It was from their ranks that the Jews had a leader who encouraged them, commiserated with them and prayed for them. It was this leader who told the people that their messiah had come. This leader was Aharon (Aaron; see *Shemot Rabbah* 3:16 on *Ezekiel* 20:5), Moshe Rabbeinu’s older brother. It was he who had the power and prestige. It was he had taught legions of students and disciples while dispensing prophecy for eighty (80) years. Nonetheless, for the sake of the Jewish people, Aharon chose to be at peace with Moshe Rabbeinu. He gladly (*Exodus* 4:14; see *Or HaChaim*) humbled himself and accepted the authority of his younger brother, telling all his disciples to accept Moshe Rabbeinu as their leader. This humility is the opposite of so-called leaders “who pursue

their own honor at the expense of the masses” (Bekhor Beheimah Tehorah). It was Aharon’s joy, and the peace that reinforced it, which were borne from his true humility, that allowed the Exodus to take place.

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu is absent from the Hagadah. The purpose of the Exodus, the purpose of a teacher, of a true Jewish leader, is to make each and every Jew aware of Hashem, not of the teacher and not of the leader. “Moshe was very humble, more than any person on the face of the earth” (*Numbers* 12:3). “Moshe and Aharon said [to the people]...‘We are nothing’” (*Exodus* 16:6-7). May God send us a Moshe Rabbeinu to take us out of our current exile and may we—and the all the contemporary Aharons—gladly accept him when he comes—may it be soon! Amen!

*agutn Shabbos!*  
*Shabbat Shalom!*

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