



## פרשת שמות

Many of us, if not all, recall our first exposure to Chumash, at least in its story form as taught to us by dedicated teachers. Undoubtedly, some of the narrative we learned remains more vivid than others; my guess is that one of the more fascinating ones - depending on the talent of the Morah - was the incident of Moshe Rabeinu at the burning bush that would not be consumed. Chasing a sheep, the fire, Hashem speaking to Moshe alone in the desert, all make for a story that the child cannot wait to share at home. That's the way it should be. As we grow older, and our teachers reveal more and more of the "rest of the story", the entire episode stimulates more and more thought and deliberation. So here we are now, and maybe we can explore it again as adults, and gain something that we would also want to absorb and share at home. Let's try.

Moshe Rabeinu sees the burning bush and realizes it is something unusual and tries, as Sforno explains ואתבונן ואראה, to understand it. Rashi points out, based on Shemos Rabbah (3:5), that Hashem chose the first revelation of נבואה to Moshe from a thorn bush to convey the message of עמו אנכי בצרה, that the Ribono Shel Olam כביכול suffers along with Klal Yisroel. The age old, invigorating and hope giving belief that the darkness of Galus will slowly end, and the Jewish people will survive, because Hashem is with us. The fire may burn, and to the amazement of all onlookers, Klal Yisroel will emerge reinforced by knowing that the יד החזקה never let go of our hand.

Moshe then turns his head, or takes five steps (SM"R 3:6), indicating that Jews suffering means something to him and Hashem says he is the one, the true shepherd

for Klal Yisroel. Hashem instructs Moshe to remove his shoes because you are on Holy Land; של נעליך מעל הוא רגליך כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא. There are many interesting ways to understand this (see Rabeinu Bachya, Kli Yakkar etc.). The Ramban (3:5) quotes Medrash Rabbah (SM"R 2:13); בכל מקום שהשכינה נגלת, anyplace that the שכינה is revealed it is forbidden to wear shoes. Therefore, Moshe and Yehoshua (5:15) were told to remove their shoes, and the Kohanim would serve in the Bais Hamikdash barefoot. At its simple meaning, the one we always understood from this Ramban, was that if the ground is holy we want to maximize OUR exposure to partake of that קדושה.

The Rav Yosef Salant, one of the Gedolai Yerushalayim who was a contemporary of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonenfeld and a very sought after Darshan) uses a של"ה to show us an עומק that we would have likely otherwise missed. A little background. The Gemara (Berachos 60b) teaches that our ברכות השחר were designed to be said in the various stages of getting up and ready for the day ahead. When you put on your shoes, we should say the Beracha of לי שעשה לי - You have given me everything that I need. The של"ה quotes his Rebbi, the מהרש"ל (in the Siddur (שער השמים), who explains why shoes translate into "everything that I need". There are four basic elements of creation: דומם - inanimate objects, צומח - plant life, חי - living beings and מדבר - man that speaks. Each level of creation is nurtured and lives off the level beneath it. Plants live off the ground and are consumed by living beings, who are in turn consumed by humans. Said the מהרש"ל, when man takes the skin off of an animal and steps on it, he is establishing his governorship, his

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dominion over all of creation. Adds Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson ( שואל ומשיב in his Derashos for Shabbos Shuva (תרל"א) that this is the reason why there is an איסור to wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur, since our עבודה is to become more angelic and divorce ourselves from the shackles of עולם הזה. So by stepping out of our shoes, we relinquish our control, our reign over כל צרכי that is the pedestrian world. I declare myself "Ois Baalhabohs" of this world and all of its pleasures - it does not belong to me, at least for today. Rav Yosef Shaul goes on to explain the Mitzvah of חליצה. There is a "relationship" between the יבם and the יבמה, named זיקה by Chazal, which binds and limits the יבמה from marrying anyone besides the יבם unless the process is done. This is not the place to try and explain זיקה, the obscure secret of Maseches Yevamos - even if I could adequately define it. The procedure of חליצה entails the removal of the shoe from the Yavam's foot, which we now understand; the Yavam is releasing his זיקה which controls the Yevama, symbolized by removing his shoe which relinquishes his dominion over her. הפלא ופלא.

Rav Yosef Salant goes on to explain: To exhibit any kind of governing conduct, to display any kind of jurisdiction in a place of Shechina's revelation, is a form of disobedience. To wear leather shoes where the Shechina should be tangible to us is an act of defiance. To think it's really YOUR WORLD could be considered resisting the ultimate authority. He bases this on a Gemara (Kiddushin 43a), according to the opinion that Dovid was not guilty for the death of Uriah Hachiti. Because Uriah was a מורד במלכות, traitorous to the kingdom, he was therefore allowed to be put to death. Uriah referred (Shmuel II 11:11) to Yoav the general, as V'Adoni Yoav - Yoav my lord, in the presence of Dovid the Melech. Rashi

comments (s.v. V'Adoni) - זהו מרד שקראו אדון בפני המלך - insubordinate in the presence of the king. Therefore, when standing before the Melech on Holy Ground, we remove our shoes to indicate we know who the "REAL BAALHABOHS" is.

This Vort really resonated with me, and hopefully to all of us, because of the world's situation. We have all tried to learn SOMETHING during this almost a year of צרה. Boy, do we really need a Navi now. So we are stuck with our own devices to figure out WHAT THE רבונו של עולם WANTS FROM US. One of the lessons is the world is NOT OURS TO RUN. The world as we knew it is but a nostalgic, distant memory. Shul's, Yeshivos, family Simchos, traveling - we can add whatever bothers us the most. Just as some of us had SOMEWHAT gotten used to this new world and grew encouraged by the news of vaccines, Hashem, it seems said, not so fast. My Yidden still don't get it and they hope to go back to the way it was before - מפטירין כדאתמול. Think about it for a moment - Does ANYONE think that the virus mutated on its own, without Hashem?? We still need to "Chazer" the lesson, to take off our shoes and remember who is the REAL BAALHABOHS and not forget that He is still sending us messages we must pay attention to.

May we all be Zocheh.

Among those that are מצפים לישועה

אמין דאנפיה  
חיים בואג איתן

