

You Don't Need to Be 6'4" to Be a Gadol B'Yisrael

BY DON JARASHOW

We just began Chodesh Nissan, a time of hischadshus, renewal. Often we work on the big things, but at times it is the smallest things that make the greatest impact.

THE UNIQUENESS OF MOSHE'S ROLE

The opening of Sefer Vayikra reads:

ויקרא אל משה וידבר ה' אליו מאהל מועד לאמר

[Hashem] called to Moshe and spoke to him from the Ohel Moed, saying:

Although everything that follows is relevant not only to Moshe, but to all of *klal Yisrael*, nevertheless it was first directed specifically to Moshe.

To explain this, the Medrash relates:

והנשאם הביאו וגו', וכלי יקר שפתי דעת, לפי שהיתה נפשו של משה עגומה עליו, ואמר הכל הביאו נדבתן למשכן ואני לא הבאתי, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא חייך שדיבורך חביב עלי יותר מן הכל, שמכלן לא קרא הדיבור אלא למשה, ויקרא אל משה.

The princes brought [the onyx stones and the stones for setting for the ephod and for the breastplate]" (Shemos 35:27). "But lips of knowledge are a precious vessel" — Moshe's soul was distressed, and he said: Everyone brought their donation for the Mishkan, but I did not bring. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: "By your life, your speech is more beloved to Me than all of it," for from all

of them, the Divine speech called only to Moshe: "Vayikra el Moshe."

Meaning, the reason the *pasuk* highlights Moshe is because Moshe did not bring a voluntary donation, and he felt a certain pain over that. Yet Hashem showed him that his unique role, that Hashem spoke specifically to him, was more beloved than all the contributions.

We must understand, this seems ironic:

The purpose of the Mishkan was for Hashem to communicate the Torah to Moshe, to give it over to *klal Yisrael*. So why would Moshe not have donated to this cause?

Additionally, if for whatever reason Moshe didn't or couldn't bring, it would be one thing for Hashem to tell him he's excused. But how can his not bringing be considered even greater, more dear than those who did bring?

WHAT MOSHE "GAVE" WITHOUT GIVING

The Shem Mishmuel gives a powerful insight into why Moshe didn't contribute.

"At times it is the smallest things that make the greatest impact."

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The whole idea of giving to the Mishkan was about connection. When a person gave something meaningful, something of value, he wasn't just donating an object, he was giving over a part of himself. It was a way of taking love for Hashem out of the heart and making it real, grounding it in action. That act required a person to push past his own pull toward the material and choose Hashem.

But that only applies to someone who lives with that tension, who has something to overcome.

Moshe was different. He was already completely refined, completely given over to Hashem. There was no inner resistance, no personal pull holding him back. So giving wouldn't have been an act of sacrifice for him. It wouldn't have expressed anything new, because there was nothing in him that wasn't already fully aligned with Hashem.

So it wasn't that Moshe didn't give. It's that there was nothing left for him to give.

Moshe had already reached the pinnacle of human achievement.

But for those of us still climbing, there are many Mishkans left to build, many parts of ourselves and our possessions still waiting to be given over and devoted to the service of our Creator.

At first glance this seems nice, but we become disheartened. How can we bring korbanos? What *shaychus* does it have to us? Should everyone get rid of their basic needs as a sacrifice to Hashem in lieu of the ability to bring an animal?

My Rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Katz of the Mir, would often speak during these weeks of korbanos about what they mean for us today. While we can no longer bring offerings in the Beis HaMikdash, the underlying idea still very much applies. A korban is about giving something up for Hashem.

In our lives, there are so many opportunities for this. It doesn't have to be something big, and it doesn't have to be every day. There are moments, situations we all recognize, where we can give a little of ourselves. Whether it's doing something small for another person, exercising restraint, or working on a *middah*, even just a bit.

And in truth, there is no such thing as "just a little." When there is a genuine intention of giving, of sacrifice for

Hashem, that itself is what He wants.

THE POWER OF SMALL ACTS

As we begin Chodesh Nisan and start thinking about chametz and Pesach, we remind ourselves of the concept of *שעור* *שבועיסה*, the leaven in the dough. Even the smallest amount can cause the dough to rise, to change its nature, and in the context of matzah, even a trace disqualifies it.

Matzah represents simplicity, wholesomeness, purity. It is straight, uninflated, real. And we all strive to be like that, to live with that kind of clarity and honesty.

But what is the *se'or* in our lives?

It's the small voice that says, "This doesn't matter. This small act isn't significant. This little moment isn't worth anything."

As we read about the korbanos, we're reminded that anything can be offered. Anything can be elevated. A small act of self-restraint, a small act of giving, a small inner shift, these are not small at all. When they are done with the mindset of a korban, of giving something of ourselves to Hashem, they become the very purpose of why we're here.

There is no such thing as a small sacrifice.

As my rebbi once said, what makes a *gadol*, is not that he was 6 foot 4. It's that nothing in his life was small.

Just as a small amount of *se'or* can disqualify the matzah, a small, dismissive thought can disqualify our *avodah*, if we let ourselves believe that it doesn't matter.

So as we read the *parshiyos* of korbanos and prepare for Pesach, for the Seder, for matzah, we're not just removing chametz from our homes, we're removing that mindset.

And we remind ourselves: Every act matters. Every moment counts, no matter how small it seems, because if it is for the King, that is exactly what Hashem wants from us.

We can all be a *gadol b'Yisrael* when we realize there's no such thing as small, because everything becomes big when it's done for the King. •

“There is no such thing as a small sacrifice.”

