

Mussar HaTorah

Torah Insights into Human Nature – Dedicated in memory of Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l

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Parashas Shmos

“AND IF THEY [THE JEWS] ASK ME [MOSHE] ‘WHAT IS HIS NAME?’ WHAT SHALL I TELL THEM?” (SHMOS 3:13)

“WHO WILL GO UP THE MOUNTAIN OF HASHEM AND WHO WILL STAND IN HIS HOLY PLACE? ONE WITH CLEAN HANDS AND A CLEAR HEART...” (TEHILIM 24:4)

THE MIDRASH (Shmos Rabbah 4:1) applies the phrase “and a clear heart,” to Moshe in the above situation. The commentary, Matnas Kehuna, explains: Moshe was asking Hashem what to tell B’nei Yisrael if they would ask, so that he would be prepared for any eventuality. Moshe didn’t want to leave Hashem’s presence, the Matnas Kehuna continues, until he had clarified every aspect of his *sh’lichus* – his mission, so that he would always be ready with an answer if asked by B’nei Yisrael.

Moshe had no questions about the integral parts of his mission

It is evident from the Midrash, as explained by the Matnas Kehuna, that Moshe had no questions about the integral parts of his mission. He knew precisely what had to be done. His questions only dealt with possible eventualities. If you were in Moshe Rabeinu’s shoes, wouldn’t you trust that Hashem has given you a complete set of marching orders? Hashem knows exactly what the mission entails. Why didn’t Moshe assume that Hashem gave him all the necessary information and that any new facts would be given to him as needed? Isn’t it a bit *chutzpadik* for Moshe to ask Hashem “what if” type of questions?

Every test or challenge that comes to us from Hashem is an opportunity for growth, a gift. However, Hashem doesn’t always present us with these tasks all wrapped up in a package with a bow on a silver platter. Part of being an honest and diligent servant of the Creator, of having a “clear heart,” is to make the extra effort to clarify all details and questions that reasonably could arise.

Every Jew must approach his tasks in life with the same thoroughness and diligence

This message does not only apply to tasks received directly from Hashem, a privilege reserved for prophets. In all our undertakings and projects, we need to be well prepared. We need to be equipped to answer any valid questions and to know what to do in any foreseeable eventuality. Of course, there are times that we must be ready to deliver the proverbial, “message to Garcia” and use our faculties to determine the next step; and certainly we must not hound someone needlessly with unnecessary questions. At the same time, we must learn from Moshe Rabbeinu that it is not only Boy Scouts that need to be prepared. Every Jew must approach his tasks in life with the same thoroughness and diligence. In doing so, we can be assured that our missions will be successful and we can hope to merit to “go up the mountain of Hashem and stand in His holy Place.”