

NON-PROFIT PROPHET

by Rabbi Dovid Green

When the construction of the tabernacle was completed, Moshe gave an accounting of all of the materials which were collected for it, and where they were used in the project. The midrash states that Moshe heard people expressing suspicion about his appropriation of the money, in terms of whether he kept any for himself. As a result, he did a public audit of the funds collected and used in order to prove that he did not keep any.

How is it possible that the greatest of prophets became suspect? Wasn't he the man whom G-d chose to bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt, split open the Sea of Reeds, and lead the nation to Sinai to receive the Torah? Doesn't G-d Himself testify about Moshe that he is completely trustworthy in all of His "house" (Numbers 12:7)?

Another case in point. When Moshe began to erect the Tabernacle, it didn't go up easily at first. People began to say "Maybe this is not what G-d told Moshe to do. Maybe this is much more complicated than what G-d said, and that's why it's not standing." As a result we find in the Torah the repetition of the words "just as G-d commanded Moshe." G-d wanted this written so as to make it clear that it was all done according to His specifications. Again, how could people suspect Moshe of adding his own two cents to G-d's commandments?

The answer is, says the Yalkut Lekach Tov, that this is the far reaching effect of "laitzonus." Laitzonus is the act of making light of important things, or conversely, taking unimportant things seriously.

How is it possible that someone with the track record of Moshe Rabbainu should be so challenged? This is the strength of laitzonus. It has the ability to make little of anything.

What is the mechanism of laitzonus? It bases itself on superficiality. One gets an idea in his mind, and without questioning or substantiating it is accepted as true. Once the idea finds acceptance, no matter how ridiculous, it takes nothing less than clear and convincing testimony with evidence to contradict and live down the allegations.

The Torah is teaching us how off-base one can be in his assumptions - even to the point of the absurd. The only way to fight it is through thorough and careful thought and courage to and debunk baseless talk before it finds a place in one's heart.

The greatest antidote and prevention for laitzonus is serious Torah learning. The more Torah we absorb in our blood, the closer we are to truth, and the less prone we will be to follow after laitzonus.

Torah learning is within reach. There are many beginners programs throughout the world. Check out Torah learning. You won't ever regret that you did.

Good Shabbos!

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