

THE PARADIGM OF STRENGTH

by Rabbi Label Lam

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moshe regarding the Cushite woman he had married, for he married a Cushite woman. They said, "Was it only to Moshe that HASHEM spoke? Did He not speak to us as well?" And HASHEM heard. Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth! (Bamidbar 12:1-3)

How does Moses manage to remain humble beyond all men even one moment after he is instructed to pen those words into the Torah for all time? The heart of every other man would likely flutter with secret joy if he would be "written up" in a positive light in some local newspaper. Here we have The Almighty Himself testifying about Moshe that he is more humble than any man on the face of the earth and a moment later it's still true! How is it humanly possible? Why is this address chosen to teach us about Moshe's extraordinary humility?

The Tomer Devorah writes: "WHO IS LIKE YOU!?" This attribute refers to the Holy One, Blessed Be He, as a tolerant King Who bears insult in a manner beyond human understanding. Without doubt, nothing is hidden from His view. In addition, there is not a moment that man is not nourished and sustained by virtue of the Divine power bestowed upon him. Thus, no man ever sins against G-d without G-d, at that very moment, bestowing abundant vitality upon him, giving him the power to move his limbs..."In a later chapter again he states: "There is none so patient and humble as our G-d...for He is absolute compassion, and before him no flaw or transgression, no severe judgment or other quality can prevent Him from watching over man and bestowing bounty and good upon him constantly...Just as G-d sustains all creatures from the highest to the lowest, despising none of them watching over them and showing compassion to all, so too should man do good to all, not despising any creature. Even the lowliest beings should be very important in his eyes and he should show concern for them, doing good to all who require his goodness..."

The Opter Rebbe, Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, who was known as the Ohaiv Yisrael- the lover of Jews, was holding court with his Chassidim when an obviously upset little boy burst in. The throngs parted like the splitting of the Red Sea to allow the little tearful boy immediate access. The Rebbe listened intently to his sad tale, "We were playing "hide and go seek". When it was Shimon's turn to hide we went and found him. When it was Yaakov's turn to hide we went and found him. When it was Eli's turn to hide we went and found him." Then the boy unleashed a fit of tears, "When it was my turn to hide, everybody went home!" Then the Rebbe too began to weep uncontrollably as he and the boy hugged. The Rebbe fumbled in one pocket and pulled out a shiny coin and then from

the other pocket he produced a small candy which he presented to him. He wiped his tears away and the child left with the beginnings of a smile upon his face.

After the encounter the Chassidim began to buzz in conversation about how sensitive and loving the Rebbe is and how he was able to identify with the pain of a small boy. The Rebbe corrected them. "It was not the boy's woe's that brought me to tears. When I heard how painful it was to hide and not be sought out I began to understand the suffering, as it were, of The Almighty. When it's your turn or my turn to hide, He always finds us. When it's His turn to hide, who is there that is seeks Him out?"

Miriam had just spoken, albeit out of love and concern, but none the less Loshon Hora about her brother Moshe. We see that intent is not an exemption! Moshe was a humble person, more than any other on the planet. He wouldn't be personally offended by Miriam words, and still she was given a dose of strong medicine.

Where did Moshe learn this extreme forbearance? How did he write such a superlative compliment about his own level of humility and it remained true? Maybe we can say that Moshe learned it from the most primary source of all -HASHEM. Imagine a 7 year old boy receiving praise that he is the strongest in the entire 2nd grade. How extra proud of himself can he be as he gazes at the teacher's towering stature and bulging muscles. He knows also how weak and vulnerable he is compared to a 3rd grader and up and up. Sure Moshe heard that he is considered "exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth". That's only here in the 2nd grade, while the Rebbe Himself is **the paradigm of strength**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.