

# A KNOWING HEART

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

*And Moshe said so to the children of Israel, and they did not listen to Moshe because of "shortness of breath" and the difficulty of the work. (Shemos 6:9)*

Because of shortness of breath and the difficulty of the work: not because they didn't believe in HASHEM and his prophecy, but they just couldn't pay attention to his words because of the pressure from the hard work. (Ramban)

Now Moshe had just given over the news - the prophecy of the redemption. That should have excited the hearts of the people but they remained numb. It should have been cause for celebration but it turned out to be a point of frustration for Moshe. The Torah does not tell us that they did not believe in Moshe or his prophecy, but only that they could not hear it because of the pressure. It is explicitly stated earlier that they believed in Moshe but now they were just unable to process the promise. Since "we are believers and the children of believers", it's therefore, not natural for a Jew not to believe. Not everyone is fully aware of the presence of this "believing-self" though, for multiple reasons.

My own personal experience interacting with many types of people for a few decades plus- tells me the same. An anecdotal- case in point: A young man I know very well who is, how shall I say, married to a situation that closes his mind to an authentic search for meaning in Torah and Mitzvos; He was out of work for some time and was very excited to tell me when he finally landed a new job. He explained in detail how the event unfolded. He had gone for a job interview on a late Friday afternoon in midtown Manhattan and then proceeded to Grand Central Station for the train ride home. He got the call first thing Monday morning. He realized then retroactively that they must have been discussing which candidate was most worthy for the job just at that time when he was going through Grand Central Terminal on his way to the train.

He explained with the conviction of a "true believer" that as he entered the train station that frigid evening he confronted a cold and hungry man begging for help. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a bundle of money including a load of loose change and while pouring into the fellow's cup he implored him not to spend the money on a drink or drugs but rather on a warm meal.

This secular minded mechanist was convincing me that it was exactly at the same time that he was exercising compassion for this poor stranger that they were making the decision about the fate of his employment status. He then looked to me for approval but I was too stunned with amazement.

Foolishly I fed him his very own words and asked him if he is telling me that that act of charity had somehow catalyzed and caused the committee to select his resume above the others?! Upon hearing my understanding of his account, he recoiled with incredulity and immediately began to re-explain the dynamics at play. "Oh no- they saw the quality of kindness in me when I was there and they realized that this job requires a people-person not just a number-cruncher. That's why I got the job!"

Only when confronted consciously with his own chronicle, which was unmistakably filled with a naturally deep faith and trust in the Divine Providence of a living G-d, did he feel the need to revise his-story! He just couldn't hear of it because of certain external circumstances.

Recently a young lady called me stressed out with news that a cousin of hers had declared that he does not believe in HASHEM. After a lengthy discussion about how she might approach him, I told her that I don't believe that he doesn't believe in HASHEM. He might speak brazenly with bold words and loads of bravado to make some shocking proclamations, but deep down inside, I strongly suspect, there beats **a knowing heart**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](http://Torah.org).