

Moshe Rabbeinu's Blemish

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Moshe Rabbeinu recaps how he appointed judges for the Jewish people and instructed them on how to be proper, righteous, and honest judges. Verse 17 reads: "Do not show favoritism in judgment; listen to both the small and the great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to Hashem."

In other words, Moshe instructed the judges to be impartial and fearless because, if they distort judgment, Hashem will have to correct it, which He prefers not to do. Moshe further says, "Any difficult case you have in deciding a halachic ruling, bring it before me, and I will decide."

Rashi comments on this, stating that because Moshe said, "Anything difficult, bring before me," he was punished, and

lost the knowledge of the laws of inheritance with the daughters of Tzelofchad mentioned in Parshat Pinchas.

The Siftei Chachamim explains Rashi's point, asking what was wrong with Moshe's statement. It seemed logical that difficult cases should be brought to him. However, Moshe was punished because his statement, coming right after the words "for judgment belongs to G-d," made it appear as if he was equating himself with G-d. This is why Moshe lost track of the judgment regarding the laws of the daughters of Tzelofchad, who were allowed to inherit the land when there was no male heir.

But the question remains: why was Moshe Rabbeinu punished for making that statement? It seems necessary to tell people that if they don't know the law, they should bring it before those who do. It makes sense. So why was he punished?

Rebbe Nachman quotes an old book called *Bechinot Olam*, which is the source of the famous expression, *Tachlit ha-yediya asher lo nedah*—"The goal of knowing is to not know at all." This means that the more you learn and delve into Yiddishkeit, the more you realize how much you don't know. It's astonishing. Unlike in other fields, where greater knowledge means knowing more, in Judaism, the more you know, the more you understand how much you don't know.

Reb Noson explains in *Likutey Halakhot* that the greatness of the Tzaddikim and the goal of mankind is to reach this pinnacle of joining these two opposites: the goal of all accumulated knowledge is to realize how much you don't know. It's about knowing to a certain extent, and beyond that, not knowing. Since Hashem is endless, His wisdom and Torah are endless. As you learn more, you just tap into more of the endless and never-ending.

Given this, why should one even learn Torah if the more you learn, the more it doesn't end? Reb Noson answers that the more you learn Torah, the more you are infused with true

humility, emunah (faith), and simcha (joy) in serving Hashem. You realize that everything counts, and what you're gaining isn't because you deserve it, rather it is all an undeserved gift. The greatest Tzaddikim, as explained beautifully by the Kedushat Levi in his exposition on the story of the wise men of Athens and Rav Yehoshua ben Hananiah in the Gemara (Bechorot, 8), enhance their emunah, humility, and truth through learning. They see how much they don't know, and this honesty with oneself is vital.

And that's the goal of knowledge. That's why we're learning. The reason we learn Torah is to infuse ourselves with emunah. Reb Noson writes in his prayers, that the goal of Torah study is to realize how much we don't know. So what is enhanced by my Torah study? My emunah. The emunah is enhanced because I'm more aware of how much is out there and how much I don't know.

With this in mind, we can answer why Moshe Rabbeinu was punished. Because he was so lofty, he should have left it at that. He shouldn't have said, "Anything which is difficult, bring before me." Instead, he should have said nothing and left it as it was. The Gemara, as Rashi brings down in Sanhedrin 8a, suggests that Moshe should have said, "Whatever is difficult, bring before the Divine Presence." But what does it mean for the lesser judges to bring cases before the Divine Presence? Even that requires Moshe Rabbeinu, who is always the intermediary between Am Yisrael and HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Everyone faces tests in life. In such moments, we are reminded of the goal of knowing—to realize how much we do not know, allowing us to receive from the Infinite Light!

So the question remains: what should he have said? What's the proper expression for Moshe Rabbeinu? He should have presented the idea of *Tachlit ha-yediya asher lo nedah*—the goal of knowing is to not know. He should have demonstrated that it's not before him because he is also nothing compared to Hashem's

Infinite Light and endless wisdom and Torah. His attitude should have been to say nothing and let the Jews come before him on their own.

Moshe Rabbeinu must constantly represent *Tachlit ha-yediya asher lo nedah*. As Rebbe Nachman teaches, M'oS'H'e stands for *M'akhloket S'hammai H'hillel*—the disagreement in Halakha between the house of Shammai and the house of Hillel. This unsettled state is synonymous with the goal of knowing is to not know. It's about holding two opposites in one: knowing everything in the Talmud, Kabbalah, and Zohar, yet realizing it is endless. His representation should always be that the goal of knowing is to not know. That's how he should be. So for him to say, "Whatever is difficult before you, bring before me," goes against this principle.

Thus, the law regarding giving land to daughters who inherit from their father who left no sons was concealed from Moshe Rabbeinu. Reb Noson explains that this is significant because the representation of a daughter inheriting land is tied to the concept of *Eshet Chayil Ateret Ba'ala*—the woman of valor is the crown to her husband (not to be confused with another verse: *Eshet Chayil Mi Yimtza* (sung on Friday nights)).

Reb Noson explains that a woman, on one hand, is a receiver, dependent on her husband who is the provider. But on another level, a woman has a higher root than the man, as she is rooted in the Keter. The Keter, symbolizing a crown, denotes the barrier between mankind and Hashem's Infinite Light. A woman is connected to this lofty level, which is why it is so important, as Chazal teaches, to respect one's wife and include her in one's life.

A man may think he doesn't need a woman because she might cause upheaval, but in reality, her connection to the Keter is vital. She has a unique spiritual antenna linked to this realm beyond the man's grasp, receiving influences from it even if she isn't consciously aware of what she is receiving.

Reb Noson explains, as does his disciple Rav Nachman Goldstein of Tcherin in his remarkable book, *Zimrat HaAretz*, that the greatness of Eretz Yisrael is that one can perceive there the Infinite Light. The Holy of Holies, which contained the Ark, was in Yerushalayim, influencing all of Eretz Yisrael, making it the Holy Land. The holiness of the Holy of Holies generates light from the Infinite Light, which is why living in Eretz Yisrael is so significant. Even after the Temple's destruction, the light left such a strong impression that it remains powerful.

When it came to the law of daughters inheriting the land, Moshe Rabbeinu was punished by not knowing the law, even though it was a simple matter. This law was concealed from him because it involved women inheriting the Holy Land, which ties to the idea of Keter and the Infinite Light. Moshe Rabbeinu was punished because he said, "Whatever is difficult before you, bring before me," indicating he wasn't maintaining the attitude of **Tachlit ha-yediya asher lo nedah**—the goal of knowing is to not know. By not displaying this, he lost the knowledge of the Halacha regarding daughters inheriting the land.

Reb Noson notes that this concept applies to every Jew. Everyone faces tests in life that force them to balance knowing and not knowing. You might have a clear plan and a routine, and then suddenly, something unexpected happens, throwing you off balance. In such moments, we are reminded of the goal of knowing—to realize how much we do not know. These setbacks teach us to embrace this idea, allowing us to receive from the Infinite Light.

May we merit, with Hashem's help, to learn from Moshe Rabbeinu and remember that the goal of knowledge is to understand how much we do not know.

Shabbat Shalom

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