

THE ALSHICH ON SEFER VAYIKRA

Timeless wisdom on the Chumash by the Alshich Hakodesh

פרשת
ויקרא
SAMPLE

ג' ניסן תשפ"ג | 25 March 2023 | An Adaptive translation by Rabbis Mordechai Rose & Nachum Spirn

HASHEM BESTOWS HONOUR UPON MOSHE (1:1)

Chapter 1, verse 1

1) He called out to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from [within] the Tent of Meeting, saying. (א) וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֵלָיו מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר.

Consider the following questions:

1. Why does the verse not state explicitly that it was Hashem Who called out to Moshe, just as it goes on to state explicitly that Hashem spoke to him?
2. Given that Hashem called out to Moshe from Tent of Meeting (the same place from which He spoke to him), the verse should have said "He called out to Moshe from the Tent of the Meeting and spoke to him" (with the words מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד coming right after אֶל מֹשֶׁה).
3. Why does it say that Hashem spoke to him "from the Tent of Meeting" rather than "in the Tent of Meeting"? "From" implies that it originated from the Tent of Meeting and then continued to be heard outside – but Chazal state that the voice of Hashem was heard only inside of the Tent!

The Midrash tells that Hashem showed Moshe more honor than He showed Avraham. With regard to Avraham, the Torah tells us that Hashem called out to Avraham through an angel and only after that did He Himself speak to him. But with regard to Moshe, Hashem Himself both called out to him and spoke to him. According to this, Question 1 becomes even stronger, for since it is significant that Hashem Himself called out to Moshe before speaking to him, the Torah should have stated clearly from the outset, "Hashem called out to Moshe."

In order to answer this question, the following introduction is necessary: When a king wishes to speak with one of his friends, it is beneath the king's honor to contact the friend directly himself and tell him to come before him, or to inform him that he wishes to speak with him. Rather, he sends one of his servants to summon him, and only after the friend appears before him will the king speak to him face to face. This is what happened with Avraham. Hashem first sent His angel, who called out to Avraham from the heavens. Only after that did Hashem Himself speak with him. Uniquely with Moshe, Hashem Himself also did the summoning ("called out") which was the preparation for speaking. This is the intent of our verse according to the Midrash: "He Himself called out to Moshe and He, Hashem, also spoke to him (but not to Avraham with whom He only spoke but had not Himself summoned)."

Based on this, we can answer our question: Since it was not really befitting Hashem's honor to do the actual calling (summoning) Himself, the verse disguises this fact by writing "He called," without mentioning Hashem's Name. In this way we understand that Hashem showed this honor to Moshe, while still maintaining the honor of Hashem. [[This answers Question 1.](#)]

In order to answer our other questions, let us look again at the words of the Sifra. As stated above, they commented on the words "from the Tent of Meeting" that Hashem's voice ceased and did not travel outside of the Mishkan. There are multiple explanations of this Sifra, the simplest explanation is that by not stating where the voice went, we learn that the voice was strong enough to be heard outside, yet stayed within the Mishkan and was not heard outside. This is because it was not fitting for Hashem's voice to be heard anywhere except in a place designated for His Presence to dwell.

However, Moshe could not enter the Mishkan at this time, as Shemos 40:35 states, Moshe could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested upon it and Hashem's Glory filled the Mishkan. Since he was unable to go in, he needed to be explicitly summoned in order for Hashem to speak to him inside. Now, because Hashem wanted to honor him by summoning him Himself, this meant that on this occasion His voice needed to emanate beyond the confines of the Mishkan (in order for Moshe to hear Him). However, the verse does not explicitly mention the location from where He called Moshe, because it would have been disrespectful to Hashem to write explicitly that His voice came out "from of the Tent of Meeting" in order to reach Moshe. The Torah concealed this fact to some extent by just saying that He called out to Moshe, without stating from where He did so. [[This answers Question 2.](#)]

Only in the continuation of the verse, when it specifically mentions that Hashem spoke to Moshe, does the Torah specify the location: from the Tent of Meeting. This is necessary to teach that when Hashem spoke, His voice was only heard by Moshe in the Tent, and that it did not miraculously travel further so that Hashem's honor would be maintained. The word לְאָמַר at the end of the verse makes this even clearer. As the Alshich points out many times, the word לְאָמַר expresses the need to transmit the upcoming information to others. Moshe was the intended conduit to relay Hashem's message to Klal Yisrael. It was not necessary for anyone else to hear it directly from Hashem. [[This answers Question 3.](#)]

In Memory of Binyamin Yosef Ben Eliezer (Benjamin Silkin) and based on a concept and conversation with Naftoli Rose.

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