



Lend a Heart

"This labor is excruciating!"
 "I feel the same way. Making bricks with mud and clay is the hardest work in the world. The mud is dirty, sticky, thick, and hard to knead and shape. The straw cuts my hands and feet."

"That's only half of the problem. The allocation of the work of carrying the building materials is all wrong. Small men carry big loads, and big men small loads. Old people have heavy burdens and young men light packages. Men do women's work, and women toil with men's labor. Everyone's body is aching from doing work that it is not suited for."

"Oy va voy, what can we do to lighten our burden?"

"Not much. It just should not get any worse. Oh no! An entourage of the king's servants is approaching. Here comes more trouble, more work, more suffering. Hashem please help us!"

Little did the Jewish slaves know that the entourage was escorting none other than Moshe Rabbeinu. Since he was raised in Paroh's palace, he received royal attendants wherever he traveled. Moshe Rabbeinu looked out from his carriage, saw the suffering of his brothers, and cried. It pained him greatly, so much so, that he did something about it. He left the royal servants who were accompanying him, and went directly to the Jewish slaves.

"My poor brothers, let me help you. This load is far too big for a man of your advanced age. Let this younger, stronger man take it from you. Take his small load in return. My thin, frail brother, you have such a heavy burden. Give it to this husky, strong worker, and you will take his light pack in exchange. The women must not do men's labor and vice versa. Let them switch and take the work that is appropriate for them!"

And so, Moshe Rabbeinu, a member of the royal household, put aside his honor, left his entourage, and went out to help his suffering brothers.

Many years later, he was tending the sheep of his father-in-law, Yisro, in Midian. He saw a strange sight. A thorn bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not being consumed. Moshe Rabbeinu turned aside to contemplate this wondrous fire.

"Hashem saw that he turned aside to see, and Elokim called out to him from amidst the bush saying, 'Moshe Moshe.' (Bereshis 3:4). The *Shechina* (Divine Presence) revealed itself to the future leader of the Jewish people! An astounding event! How did Moshe Rabbeinu merit such a revelation? The Medrash Rabba (Shemos 1:27) relates the following. The Holy One, Blessed be He said to Moshe, "You put aside your royal duties (servants and escorts) and went to attend to the suffer-

ing of Klal Yisrael. You treated them like brothers (in lightening their burdens). So too, I will put aside My attendants (heavenly hosts) and speak directly to you. And so, "*vayikra*," Hashem called to him, an affectionate and honorable greeting, "Moshe, Moshe." He repeated his name twice – once for affection, and once for honor. This Divine Revelation, filled with love and honor, came to Moshe Rabbeinu because he cared about his fellow Jews. Their suffering pained him. He cried for them. He humbled himself and left his royal duties to help them. This empathy, mercy, and humility, merited for him the affectionate greeting from the Almighty, Creator of the universe. That is the merit of these good *middos*.



*Kinderlach . . .
 Many times our fellow Jews need our help. Let us care for them and help them. Begin in the home. Does Imma have a lot of housework? Lend a hand and help her out. Does your younger brother or sister need help with schoolwork? Care for them, and take some of your precious time to learn with them. Does Abba need your appreciation? Give it to him. Do elderly relatives come to visit? They often need a lot of empathy, time, and assistance to ease their burden. Give them the help and nachas that they deserve. Neighbors and schoolmates often need someone to talk to. Be a good listener, lend a heart, and share their burden. Of course, if they need assistance in other areas, you should be there for them. Moshe Rabbeinu saw the suffering of his brothers, felt their pain, humbled himself, and went out to help them. For this, he merited Divine Revelation. We see how great the reward for these middos is. Work on them kinderlach. Great things await you.*

Be Happy for Him

"Yaakov, I have great news for you."
 "What is it, Avi?"
 "I was just accepted into the top *shnur* (class) of the Yeshiva."
 "Avi that is wonderful! I am truly happy for you."

"Yaakov, I always enjoy telling you good news."

"I always enjoy hearing good news, Avi. Especially news about people's successes." "That is precisely why I enjoy telling you. What is your secret, Yaakov? How are you so happy for other people?"

"Why shouldn't I be happy, Avi? Hashem has blessed a person with success. That makes him happy. He wants to share his happiness with others. I give him pleasure by joining in his happiness. Also, Hashem shows His love by granting him success. Shouldn't I love someone who Hashem loves?"

"You have the right attitude, Yaakov. Not everyone thinks so positively. Some people are jealous."

"That is an *aveyra* (sin) which is listed in the Aseres HaDibros. On the other hand, being happy with another person's accomplishments is a mitzvah. Rav Shmuel Hominer, in his sefer *Eved Hamelech* points out the source from this week's parasha."

"Really? Where?"

"Hashem says, 'He (Aharon) is going out to meet you (Moshe) and when he sees you he will rejoice his heart' (Shemos 4:14). Rashi comments that one might have thought that Aharon would be resentful that Moshe rose to greatness. After all, he was the younger brother. He also fled Mitzraim 68 years before, leaving his older brother Aharon to shoulder the burden of leading the people. Quite the contrary! Aharon rejoiced in his heart. Not just a superficial happiness. For this mitzvah, he merited to wear the *choshen* (breastplate) on his heart. Rav Hominer relates that we are commanded to be happy and have a good heart for our friend's good fortune and accomplishments. Therefore Avi, I am doing a mitzvah every time that I am happy for another person."

"Yaakov, may you merit many more mitzvos."

*Kinderlach . . .
 Did your friend just get a good grade in his test? Be happy for him! Did the neighbor just have a baby? Rejoice together! Did your sister just get a new Shabbos dress? Enjoy her happiness! Sharing people's good fortunes makes them even happier. And it gives you a big mitzvah. Which should make you happy. And of course we know that our mitzvos make Hashem happy. So, join in and make everyone happy!*

Parasha Questions:

- Who were Shifra and Puah? (Rashi 1:15)
- How did the midwives keep the newborn sons alive? (Rashi 1:17)
- Which reward did Hashem give to the midwives? (1:21 and Rashi)