



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Parshat Shemot introduces us to Moshe Rabbeinu; his birth and subsequent childhood being raised by the daughter of *Paroh*, his exile as he flees to *Midian*, and of course the seminal moment when Hakadosh Baruch Hu reveals himself to Moshe with the supernatural vision of the thornbush that is completely engulfed by flame, but somehow is not consumed.

Many *meforshim* have questioned the significance of this particular medium, the supernatural “burning bush” as the vehicle for Moshe to receive his sacred mission to lead the Jewish People, and to bring them forth from *Mitzrayim*.

The Chasidic Masters in particular, saw important messages represented by this supernatural encounter.

The ***Shem Mishmuel, the Rebbe of Sokatchov zy’a***, suggests that the thornbush is the humblest of trees, and *Har Sinai* is the humblest of mountain tops. These two specific factors were meant to convey a fundamental message to Moshe Rabbeinu whom the Torah will later describe as being exceedingly humble:

וְהָאִישׁ מְאֹד עָנָו [עֲנִי] מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר
עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Now Moses was a very humble man, more than any other man that was upon the face of the earth.

In presenting this sacred call to Moshe, in such a way, says the *Shem Mishmuel*, Hashem meant to convey to Moshe, that indeed he was perfectly suited for this

sacred mission, specifically because he was humble, that even this humble thornbush, on this humble mountain top, can become a conduit for Hashem to reveal miracles.

The *Noam Elimelech, Reb Elimelech of Lijensk zy’a*, sees the supernatural occurrence of the bush being engulfed by flames, but not being consumed, as an important lesson for each of us. The thornbush represents the thorny presence of the *yetzer hara*. The flames, says the ***Noam Elimelech***, represent the passionate fire of dedicated *Avodat Hashem*. The imagery of the burning bush, explains ***Reb Elimelech***, is meant to serve as a constant reminder, that even if we are on fire in our *Avodat Hashem*, the thorny *yetzer hara*, is never truly consumed, it is ever present, and we must ever be aware, and work to overcome its challenges to our spiritual growth.

The *Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy’a*, suggests that the thornbush is meant to represent the Jewish People. Throughout our long history, Am Yisrael, has indeed been surrounded by flames—flames of hatred, flames of immorality, yet despite each of these factors, says the *Slonimer Rebbe*, those flames will never entirely consume the Jewish People.

Yehi Ratzon, may each of us find *chizuk* in these three beautiful teachings, and strive to live lives of humble *Avodat Hashem*, ever wary of the *yetzer hara*’s constant presence, and be strengthened in knowing that indeed the Jewish People are eternal. ■