



# RABBI SHALOM ROSNER

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## Who's on First?

הוּא אַהֲרֹן וְמֹשֶׁה אָשֶׁר אָקַר הַלְּהֵם הַזִּيְאָו אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל-אֶצְבָּעָתָם: הֵם הַמְדֻבָּרִים אֶל-פְּרֻעָה מֶלֶךְ  
מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן:  
(שמות כ:כ-כז)

*"That is Aharon and Moshe, to whom Hashem said, "Take the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their legions. They are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to let Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt; they are Moshe and Aharon.* (Shemos 6: 26-27).

In this week's *parsha* we find the aforementioned two consecutive *pesukim* that cite both Moshe and Aharon. In the first *pasuk*, Aharon's name is mentioned first, whereas in the second *pasuk*, Aharon's name appears as the latter. Why is the order of the names interchanged?

Rashi explains that there are times where Aharon's name precedes Moshe's name and the opposite to highlight that they are

both equal (*she'shikulin ki'ehad*). Rashi's reference to these two brothers being equal, refers to their contribution, as two individuals cannot be identical in all manners.

Rashi though does not provide an explanation as to why one name precedes the other in a particular instance. Upon examination of the two *pesukim* referenced above, we can derive an important lesson.

In the first *pasuk* where we are told of the exodus – leading Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, Aharon's name precedes Moshe's name. One would have expected that specifically with respect to this description, Moshe's name would be positioned more dominantly as he was primarily responsible for this task.

In the second *pasuk*, when we are told that they spoke to Pharaoh, Moshe's name precedes Aharon's name. One would have expected that with respect to speaking to Pharaoh, Aharon's name would be mentioned first, as he was the official mouthpiece, given Moshe's speech impediment.

Rav Rivlin, in Iyunai HaParsha provides a

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profound explanation as to the substitution of Moshe and Aharon's names in these circumstances. Both Moshe and Aharon were so humble, that even when the task was essentially conducted by one of them, each gave credit to the other for the success achieved.

We know Moshe was one of the humblest men who lived. In fact, he initially rejects Hashem's request to lead the nation, stating "who am I to stand before Pharaoh and lead the people out of Egypt" (Shemos 3:11). Hashem responds this is the sign (*zeh lecha haos*), which Rav Rivlin interprets as – your humble response is the reason you were selected and why you will be successful.

When Moshe challenges Hashem and states that Bnei Yisrael didn't believe Moshe when he prophesied about leaving Egypt, so how will Pharaoh believe him, Moshe concludes his statement by asserting: "*va'anai aral sefasayim*" – I have a speech impediment (Shemos 6:12). This highlights how Moshe took responsibility for his failures. He did not blame Bnei Yisrael for their lack of faith, rather, their disbelief must have been due to his defect

as an orator. He must have been unable to properly relay the message.

It is interesting to note that later in the parsha when instructed to conduct the makka of Dam and Zefardea – Moshe's name precedes that of Aharon (Shemos 8:1-4). When Pharaoh invites them in to request that they have the frogs removed, the Torah states: "vayikra Pharaoh l'Moshe V'Aharon", Moshe's name appears first, notwithstanding that it was Aharon who performed the act (hitting the water and the ground). This is consistent with our thesis above. When one performed an act, they wholeheartedly believed that the other was responsible for the success that was achieved.

We learn from Moshe and Aharon, that one is to take responsibility for their shortcomings and share the glory of their achievements. This is particularly important in a marriage. If each spouse takes responsibility for any misunderstanding and praises the other for the couple's successes, it ensures a happy marriage. May we always act with humility, credit others when due and take accountability for our failures. ■

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