

# BS"D Yom Kippur and Parashat Ha'a'zinu 5783

HaShem does not possess any characteristics associated with any created being. We do not even have the necessary vocabulary to discuss the essence of HaShem, which is beyond all logic or laws of physics. HaShem is "something else". However, out of sheer necessity, the Torah itself sets the precedent of applying human characteristics to the Almighty because there is no other avenue of speech or thought by which we can discuss the Creator. Therefore, we find verbs such "HaShem said" or adjectives like "HaShem was angry", to make it possible to contemplate how HaShem communicated to lowly man; and as if HaShem also possess emotional qualities like human beings.

## **GREAT EXPECTATIONS – GREAT DISAPPOINTMENTS**

The above heading encapsulates the life of humanity's greatest Jew – Moshe Rabbeinu.

Moshe possessed great expectations.

1- He expected that his family life would be an example for all the nation. However, Moshe was forced to withdraw from his wife Tzipora due to the circumstances of his closeness to HaShem.

*Disappointment number one!*

2- Moshe expected to enter Eretz Yisrael at the head of the

former unruly, defiant, intractable and rebellious multitude of slaves whom he had turned into the only holy nation on earth. But our parasha states (31:2):

וְיֹמֶם הַזֶּה מֵלֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל 'מִלְּפָנֵי כָּל־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
:וְיֹמֶם הַזֶּה מֵלֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל

*He said to them, I am today one hundred twenty years old. I am no longer able (permitted) to lead you, and HaShem has informed me that I will not cross over this River Jordan.*

*Disappointment number two!*

3- Moshe expected that his two sons Gershom and Eliezer would succeed him in leading the nation. But our parasha states (31:3):

וְיֹמֶם הַזֶּה מֵלֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל 'מִלְּפָנֵי כָּל־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
: 'וְיֹמֶם הַזֶּה מֵלֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עַמּוֹת־יִשְׂרָאֵל

*The Lord your God himself will cross over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Yehoshua will cross over before you, as HaShem promised.*

Yehoshua will succeed you, not your sons.

*Disappointment number three!*

4- Moshe expected that the millions of Jews who had become HaShem's chosen nation through his leadership, guidance and education would forever cling to HaShem and the 613 mitzvot. But our parasha states (31,16):

*HaShem said to Moshe: "Soon you will lie down with your ancestors. Then this people will begin to prostitute themselves to the foreign gods in the land into which they are going; they will forsake Me, breaking My covenant that I have made with them."*

All of Moshe's teaching will be for naught. His life's work: forty years of toil and heartbreak in order to raise the people from down-trodden slaves to the level of talmidei chachamim will all be erased.

## *Disappointment number 4!*

In fact, of all the superior spiritual acts of Moshe nothing remained. Even after his death he will be far removed from the nation that he served and more than once saved from HaShem's indignant, righteous wrath.

WHY? Why was Moshe punished with such great disappointment?

For this we have to return to parashat KI Tisa (in the Book of Shemot) to the episode following the Golden Calf, where Moshe appealed to HaShem to pardon the disastrous sin (33:18-23):

מְלֹא קָרְבָּנוֹתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ 'א תְּהִלָּתֶךָ )...  
:תְּהִלָּתֶךָ

תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ )...  
:תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ

מְלֹא קָרְבָּנוֹתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ תְּהִלָּתֶךָ )...  
:תְּהִלָּתֶךָ

<sup>18</sup> Moses said, “Please show me Your glory.” <sup>19</sup> And He said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name... <sup>20</sup> But, He said, you cannot see My face, for no one shall see Me and live.” <sup>21</sup> And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by Me where you shall stand on the rock, <sup>22</sup> and while My glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; <sup>23</sup> then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”

Moshe pleaded with HaShem to draw him close to the infinite entity called “HaShem” to reveal to Moshe that which no other creation including angels can ever strive for. But in order to have that privilege there would be a price. Moshe would have to share not only the intelligence of the Almighty but even His pain and sorrows (as it would be).

HaShem had great expectations from the Jewish nation. He brought the Egyptian monarchy down to its knees in order to free the Jewish slaves. However, eighty percent of them refused to leave. HaShem was greatly disappointed!

At Sinai HaShem presented to the nation His holy Torah and its regulations through great expectations of this nation’s future as a spiritual bond between worlds. However, the people very quickly disengaged themselves from the bond and worshipped the

Golden Calf. A bitter disappointment for the Creator!

HaShem commanded the nation to enter the holy land; however, all six hundred thousand males refused because of the pessimistic report of the scouts. Another big disappointment!

The nation tested HaShem ten times in the desert experience, wavering between to believe or not to believe. And 40 years later, when right on the threshold of entering the land, many sinned with the daughters of Moav. A big disappointment!

HaShem tells Moshe that if you want to be close to Me then you will have to share My emotions – including the trauma from great expectations to great disappointments.

Moshe passed away but HaShem's disappointments continued far into the future. The destruction of the two Batei Mikdash and the necessity to send the Jewish nation into exile.

The existential dilemma that faces Am Yisrael is to restore HaShem's great expectations from His nation Yisrael.

How can we do it?

The answer is to demonstrate to HaShem through mesirat nefesh (self-sacrifice for Judaism) that we deserve His great hopes for our loyalty as His chosen people.

For 2000 years we experienced and overcame multiple tests of faith in the face of the oldest hatred in history – anti-Semitism.

Time after time we have proven that we want to be part of the age-old bond between HaShem and our fathers.

And after the Shoah our desire to return to our ancestral holy land is proof enough that we deserve HaShem's great expectations that we can and will materialize the great potential inherent in the Jewish soul.

Today's Medinat Yisrael will be the platform for the future Jewish redemption, with all that implies.

Gemar Chatima Tova

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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