

“Let me turn aside now and behold this great sight”

Moshe Yearned to Approach the Bush to Hasten the Receiving of the Torah in order to Diminish HKB”H’s Suffering

In this week’s parsha, parshas Shemos, we learn of the very first time HKB”H reveals Himself to Moshe Rabeinu—Hashem’s loyal servant and Yisrael’s loyal shepherd. According to Rabeinu Bachayei (Shemos 3, 4), the amazing revelation of the burning bush occurred on the fifteenth of Nissan, exactly one year prior to the exodus from Mitzrayim. So let us review the pesukim from the holy Torah that describe this incredible first meeting between HKB”H and Moshe Rabeinu (ibid. 3, 1):

“Moshe was grazing the sheep of Yisro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midyan; he guided the sheep far into the wilderness,, and he arrived at the Mountain of G-d, near Chorev. An angel of Hashem appeared to him in a flame of fire from within the thorn-bush. He saw and behold! The bush was burning in the fire but the bush was not consumed. Moshe thought, ‘Let me turn aside now and behold this great sight—why will the bush not be burned?’ Hashem saw that he turned aside to see; and G-d called out to him from amid the bush and said, ‘Moshe, Moshe,’ and he replied, ‘Here I am!’ He said, ‘Do not come closer to here; take off your shoes from your feet, for the place upon which you stand is holy ground.’

And He said, ‘I am the G-d of your father, the G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak, and the G-d of Yaakov.’ Moshe hid his face, for he was afraid to gaze toward G-d. Hashem said, ‘I have indeed seen the affliction of My people that is in Mitzrayim and I have heard its outcry because of its taskmasters, for I know its pains. I shall descend to rescue it from the hand of Mitzrayim and to bring it up from that land to a god and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaani, the Chitti, the Emori, the Perizi, the Chivi and the Yevusi.’”

Even if all the firmaments were parchments, all the trees were quills, all the seas were ink, and all the inhabitants of earth were scribes, it would not suffice to decipher the mysteries concealed within this divine revelation. HKB”H appeared to Moshe: **“בלכת אש מתוך”** **“הסנה—**in a flame of fire from within the thorn-bush. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon us to attempt to comprehend to some small degree, to the best of our limited abilities, the following:

What is the significance of HKB”H appearing to Moshe “in a flame of fire from within the thorn-bush”?

What prompted Moshe, the man of G-d, to draw nearer to obtain a better view of the phenomenon: “Let me turn aside now and behold this great sight—why will the bush not be burned?”

The Orach LaChaim points out that the word **“נא”** is employed in the passuk; the Gemara (Berachos 9a) states that the word **“נא”** indicates a request; we must endeavor to explain what request we are dealing with here.

A Preparation for the Observance of the Mitzvos Lo Ta’aseh and the Fulfillment of the Mitzvos Aseh

Let us begin our investigation by introducing a tremendous insight found in the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh regarding the passuk (Shemos 3, 5): **“וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל תִּקְרַב הַלּוֹם, שֶׁל נֶעְלִיךְ מֵעַל רֹגְלֶיךָ”**-- He said, “Do not come closer to here, take off your shoes from your feet.” He points out that HKB”H purposely uttered the prohibition, the mitzvas lo ta’aseh, of: “Do not come closer,” before the positive command, the mitzvas aseh, of: “take off your shoes from your feet.” He wished to teach us that He is more concerned that we do not transgress a mitzvas lo ta’aseh—which damages our soul—than that we fail to fulfill a mitzvas aseh. Let us enjoy an excerpt from his commentary:

“דע כי בכל התורה כולה גילה ה' דעתו ורצונו, כי עיקר הקפדתו ומוסרו הוא על מצוות לא תעשה כי זה יחבול בנפשו... אבל מצוות עשה הם השגת הטוב כשיהיו ובהעדרם אין עונש, זולת על פרטים ידועים כגון פסח ומילה. והנה כאן צוה לו ה' מצוות לא תעשה ומצוות עשה, לא תעשה היא אל תקרב הלוֹם, ואמרו ז"ל (עירובין צו.) כל מקום שנאמר פן ואל אינו אלא לא תעשה, ומצוות עשה היא של נעלך... ותמיד יקדים ה' השמירה לעשייה, דכתיב (דברים ד-ו) ושמרתם ועשיתם... לזה גם כן הקדים החמור, אל תקרב לא תעשה, ואחר כך עשה של וגו', שינהוג כבוד במקום המקודש.”

At first glance, the Ohr HaChaim’s words are somewhat puzzling. At the time of this historic revelation, the Torah had not yet been given

to Yisrael. So, what would prompt HKB”H to impress upon Moshe Rabeinu at their very first encounter—at the burning bush—that Mitzvos lo ta’aseh are more significant than Mitzvos aseh? We will attempt to prove based on a fundamental principle that this momentous event—the revelation of HKB”H to Moshe in the burning bush—represented a vital preparation for the giving of the Torah to Yisrael.

The Ramban’s Comparison of the Revelation of the Burning Bush to the Revelation at Sinai

Now, let us introduce a Midrash (S.R. 2, 4) which claims that the revelation of the burning bush took place on Har Sinai: **“ויבוא אל הר האלהים חורבה. ה’ שמות יש לו, הר אלקים, הר בשן, הר גבנונים, הר חורב, הר ה’ של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום—סיני. הר האלקים - ששם קבלו ישראל אלהותו של הקב”ה”**—this Midrash teaches us that this mountain had five distinct names—among them the Mountain of G-d, Mount Chorev and Har Sinai. It was known as the Mountain of G-d, because it is where Yisrael accepted HKB”H as their G-d. [Note that the names Mountain of G-d and Chorev appear in the pesukim introducing the revelation of the burning bush.] Similarly, the Targum Yonatan explains: **“של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום—אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא”**—Moshe was instructed to remove his footwear, because he was standing on holy ground—the future site on which Moshe would receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael. This fact can also be deduced from HKB”H’s remark to Moshe (Shemos 3, 12): **“בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלקים על ההר—הזה—when you take the people out of Mitzrayim, you will worship G-d on this mountain. Rashi comments that this is a reference to Yisrael receiving the Torah on the very same mountain.**

Yet, according to this understanding, we must explain why HKB”H warned Moshe: **“אל תקרב הלום”**—do not come any closer. For, we know that at Matan Torah he was allowed to approach and come closer to HKB”H, as it is written (Shemos 19, 20): **“וירד ה’ על הר סיני—אל ראש ההר ויקרא ה’ למשה אל ראש ההר ויעל משה”**—Hashem called Moshe up onto the mountain and he did indeed ascend. Additionally, it states (ibid. 20, 18): **“ויעמוד העם מרחוק ומשה ניגש אל הערפל—אשר שם האלקים”**—while the people stood at a distance, Moshe approached G-d through the mist. So, why did HKB”H prevent Moshe from drawing nearer to Him on this occasion?

Anticipating this question, the Ramban explains that Moshe Rabeinu had not yet achieved the spiritual level congruent with this level of prophecy. In fact, the Ramban proves his point from a passuk that later describes the levels to which Moshe soared at the revelation on Har Sinai. According to the text, there Moshe achieved the level of (Bamidbar 12, 8): **“ותמונת ה’ ביט”**—at the image of Hashem does he gaze. In contrast, at the time of the revelation of the burning bush, it states: **“ויסתתר משה פניו כי ירא מהביט אל האלקים”**—Moshe hid his

face, for he was afraid to gaze toward G-d. Obviously, the reason he hid his face was as a reaction to HKB”H’s warning: **“אל תקרב הלום”**—not to come any closer to that sacred spot. From this warning, he comprehended that he was not yet worthy to gaze at G-d.

The Vision of the Burning Bush Was a Preparation for Matan Torah

Let us focus on the Ramban’s comparison of Moshe’s spiritual level at the time of the revelation of the burning bush with his spiritual level at the time of Matan Torah. We can suggest that HKB”H’s initial revelation to Moshe—in the form of the burning bush on Har Sinai—was an integral part of Moshe’s preparation for his role in the tremendous revelation that was to take place during Matan Torah. At Matan Torah, HKB”H descended upon Har Sinai for all of Yisrael to see, and Moshe climbed up the mountain to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael.

This notion is substantiated by the commentary of Rabeinu Bachayei on the passuk (Shemos 3, 1): **“ומשה היה רועה - והנה המראה הזאת הוא רמז למשה, למה שעתידי הקב”ה ליתן תורה באש על ידו במקום הזה, וישמענו כל ישראל אנכי ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה”**—this vision hinted to Moshe that HKB”H would give the Torah through him, by means of fire, at this very same location. Then Rabeinu Bachayei adds the following: **“של נעליך - הזהירו שישלול ממנו החומריות שהמשילם לנעלים, לפי שהחומר דבק בגוף כמו שהמנעל דבק ברגל, וכשם שיש ביד האדם לשלול נעלו מעל רגלו, כן בידו שישלול ממנו החומריות כדי שיהיה מוכן לנבואה, וראוי להידבק באור השכל”**—he is ordered to remove his shoes which symbolize material things and values. The message is clear. Just as a person can remove his footwear which is attached to his foot, so, too, he is capable of ridding himself of material values and pursuits—in preparation for levels of prophecy and worthiness to embrace the light of intelligence.

We find a source for Rabeinu Bachayei’s commentary in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 12, 27a): **“של נעליך, הכא רמז דאתפשט מן גופא—דיליה דאיהו נעל, לגבי גופא אחרא דאתקריב”** In other words, Moshe is instructed to divest himself of his corporeal self—referred to as a shoe—and don a spiritual self in order to draw nearer to Hashem. As explained, he was instructed to do so in order to sanctify himself in preparation for the incredible revelation of Matan Torah that would take place on this site. As explained by the Ramban, he was not yet worthy for that role.

Let us demonstrate how beautifully this interpretation fits into the text: **“וירא ה’ כי סר לראות”**—Moshe wished to ascend the mountain where HKB”H had rested His presence in the form of the burning bush; **“ויקרא אליו אלקים מתוך הסנה ויאמר משה ויאמר הנני, ויאמר—אל תקרב הלום”**—he is instructed not to come any closer, because

he was not yet worthy; however, to remedy this shortcoming, he is instructed: “של נעליך מעל רגליך”—step out of your physical self and divest yourself of all bodily needs; **כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו**—for you are destined to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael on this site. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to begin the sanctification process by freeing yourself of all physical needs.

I am—**ויאמר אנכי אלקי אביך אלקי אברהם אלקי יצחק ואלקי יעקב**—the G-d of your holy forefathers; they sanctified their bodies by freeing themselves of material interests; in this merit, HKB”H associated His name with them. Therefore, it is your obligation, Moshe, to follow in their footsteps, and to rid yourself of all your physical needs and your corporeal self. Hearing these words from HKB”H, indicating that he **ויסתר משה פניו כי ירא מהביט אל האלקים**—was not yet worthy to step onto the mountain he covered his face, attempting to look away,—**מהביט אל האלקים**—due to his extreme shame.

Having shown that the entire revelation of the burning bush was merely a preparation for the revelation at Sinai, we can now better appreciate the words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh. The purpose of receiving the Torah is to fulfill and observe the 248 Mitzvos aseh and the 365 Mitzvos lo ta’aseh. Hence, it was only fitting that HKB”H chose to emphasize at precisely this encounter the great significance of the Mitzvos lo ta’aseh. It is even more important to be careful to avoid transgressing a mitzvas lo ta’aseh than it is to actually perform a mitzvas aseh. For, the transgression of a lo ta’aseh harms the soul.

“Do not approach this spot” Corresponds to the Mitzvah of Hagbalah “Remove your shoes” Corresponds to the Mitzvah of Prishah

I was struck by a wonderful thought. At this first revelation in the form of the burning bush on Har Sinai, HKB”H gave Moshe two Mitzvos. The first mitzvah was: **אל תקרב הלום**—do not approach this spot. The second mitzvah was: **של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא**—remove your shoes from your feet, because you are standing on holy ground. These two Mitzvos parallel the two Mitzvos that HKB”H commanded Yisrael in preparation for receiving the Torah on Har Sinai—in the order depicted by the Gemara (Shabbas 87a), according to the commentary of Rashi.

First, HKB”H commanded them not to trespass the designated boundaries—mitzvas “hagbalah”—as it is written (Shemos 19, 12): **והגבלת את העם סביב לאמרו השמרו לכם עלות בהר ונגוע בקצהו כל הנוגע בהר מות יומת**—and you shall set boundaries around it for the people, saying, “Guard yourselves from ascending the mountain or touching its edge; whoever touches the mountain shall surely die.” The second mitzvah, He gave them was mitzvas “prishah”—to separate

from their wives—as it is written (ibid. 10): **ויאמר ה' אל משה לך אל העם וקדשתם היום ומחר וכבסו שמלותם**—Hashem said to Moshe, “Go to the people and prepare them today and tomorrow, and they shall wash their clothing.” The Gemara (ibid.) explains that this latter passuk is a reference to the mitzvah of “prishah,” which is specified in a subsequent passuk (Shemos 19, 14): **ויורד משה מן ההר אל העם ויקדש את העם ויכבסו שמלותם, ויאמר אל העם היו נכונים לשלשת ימים אל תגשו אל אשה**—Moshe descended from the mountain to the people. He prepared the people and they washed their clothing. He said to the people, “Be ready for a three-day period; do not approach a woman.”

If we examine the matter closely, we find that the two Mitzvos HKB”H commanded Moshe regarding the burning bush are exactly these same two Mitzvos. How so? The command: “do not approach this spot,” corresponds to the mitzvah of “hagbalah”—Moshe is instructed not to come any closer than he was given permission to. While the command: “remove your shoes from your feet,” corresponds to the mitzvah of separating from one’s wife. The Zohar hakadosh explains on numerous occasions (Pekudei 222a, Chukas 180a) that with this command HKB”H alluded to him that he separate from his wife—who is symbolized by the shoe.

Let us present the words of the divine Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, in the Zohar hakadosh (Nasso 148a) in their Hebrew translation:

בשעה שאמר לו הקב"ה של נעליך מעל רגליך נודעזע ההר, אמר מיכאל לפני הקב"ה, רבונו של עולם אתה רוצה לסתור את האדם, שהרי כתוב (בראשית ה-ב) זכר ונקבה בראם ויברך אותם [ויקרא את שמם אדם], ואין הברכה מצויה אלא במי שהוא זכר ונקבה [איש ואשתו], ואתה אומר שיפרוש מאשתו. אמר לו [הקב"ה] הרי כבר קיים משה פריה ורביה, עתה אני רוצה שיתחבר עם השכינה ובשבילו תרד השכינה לדור עמו”.

When HKB”H told him to remove his shoes, the mountain trembled. Michael said to HKB”H: “Master of the Universe, do you wish to destroy the man? For it is written (Bereishis 5, 2): He created them male and female and He blessed them (He called them “man”); only those who live as man and wife are blessed; and you are instructing him to separate from his wife?!” HKB”H answered him: “Moshe has already fulfilled the mitzvah of ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’ Now I want him to join with the Shechinah; for him, the Shechinah will descend—to dwell with him.”

Now, one might ask that above we presented the interpretations of the Tikunei Zohar and Rabeinu Bachayei. According to those sources, with the command: “remove your shoes” HKB”H intended for him to divest himself of all physical needs. We would reply that these two interpretations are in fact one and the same. The Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 12, 27a) actually provides both interpretations and concludes that they

are both true and correct. He was commanded to separate from his wife in order to free himself of all physical needs.

A Wife Is Represented by a “Shoe”— for She Separates Her Husband from the Earth’s Curse

I would like to provide my own explanation as to the reason the mountain itself trembled. First, however, let us explain why HKB”H refers to a wife as a “na’al”—a shoe—when He commands Moshe: “remove your shoes from your feet.” We have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 129a): “לעולם ימכור אדם קורות ביתו ויקח מנעלים לרגליו”—a person should sell even the beams of his house, if necessary, to acquire shoes for his feet. Additionally, we have learned (Pesachim 113b) that one of seven categories of people who are banished from heaven is: “המונע מנעלים מרגליו”—one who does not wear shoes. In Asarah Maamarot, the Rama of Pano explains that in the aftermath of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, the earth was cursed, as it is written (Bereishis 3, 17): “ארורה האדמה בעבורך”—accursed is the ground because of you. As a consequence, one must wear shoes to create a barrier between oneself and the cursed earth.

Now, we find that the Torah states explicitly (Bereishis 2, 18): **“וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הִיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֶזְרָא כְּנֶגְדּוֹ”**—Hashem G-d said, “It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.” Regarding one’s wife, we have learned in the Gemara (B.M. 59a): **“לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אָדָם זֹהוּר בְּכַבּוֹד אִשְׁתּוֹ, שְׂאִין בְּרַכָּה מִצִּוְיָהּ בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם אֵלֶּא בִּשְׂבִיל אִשְׁתּוֹ”**—a person must take great care to honor and respect his wife; for a man’s house is only blessed on account of his wife. Elsewhere the Gemara states (Yevamot 62b): **“כֹּל אָדָם שְׂאִין לוֹ אִשָּׁה שְׂרוּי בְּלֹא שְׂמֻחָה, בְּלֹא טוֹבָה... בְּמַעֲרַבָּא אִמְרֵי בְּלֹא תוֹרָה”**—Any man without a wife is devoid of happiness, devoid of blessing and devoid of good . . . in the west (in Eretz Yisroel) they added that he is also devoid of Torah.

Furthermore, we have learned (Yoma 72b): **“יִרְאֵת ה' טְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת”** לעד (תהלים יט-י), אמר רבי חנינא, זה הלומד תורה בטהרה, מאי היא נושא **“אִשָּׁה וְאַחֲרָיָהּ כִּי לוֹמֵד תוֹרָה”**—the passuk in Tehillim (19, 10) states: “The fear of Hashem is pure, enduring forever.” Rabbi Chanina said that this refers to one who learns Torah in purity; in other words, he first marries a woman and then learns Torah. It is for this reason that HKB”H referred to a man’s wife as a “na’al”—a shoe. Just as a shoe separates man from the curse of the earth, in like fashion, a man’s house is not blessed except in the merit of his wife. Because of his wife he is able to learn Torah in purity and to separate himself from the curse of the earth.

We can now explain very nicely why Har Sinai—where Yisrael were destined to receive the Torah—trembled when it heard HKB”H command Moshe Rabeinu to separate from his wife. For, we have just learned that one who lives without a wife is necessarily devoid of

Torah. We have also learned that it is only possible to learn Torah in purity after marrying a wife. If Yisrael were to follow Moshe’s example and separate from their wives, how would they be able to learn the Torah that they were destined to receive on Har Sinai in purity? Hence, HKB”H replied that this command only applied to Moshe Rabeinu; he had already fulfilled the mitzvah of “peru u’revu,” and had been sanctified with an extreme level of kedushah that only he was worthy of.

In summary, these two Mitzvos that HKB”H commanded Moshe at the revelation of the burning bush: “do not approach this spot any closer” and “remove your shoes,” correspond to the two Mitzvos that HKB”H commanded Yisrael in preparation for receiving the Torah. The mitzvah of “do not approach” corresponded to the mitzvah of “hagbalah”: “guard yourselves from ascending the mountain.” The mitzvah of “do not approach” corresponded to the mitzvah of “prishah”—separating from the wives. According to what we have explained, HKB”H issued these commands at the revelation of the burning bush on Har Sinai as a preparation for Matan Torah on the very same site. Therefore, HKB”H commanded Moshe that he sanctify himself with extreme kedushah in preparation for Matan Torah.

Additionally, Moshe was commanded to sanctify himself with these two Mitzvos in order to pave the way for all of Yisrael to sanctify themselves properly prior to Matan Torah via mitzvas “hagbalah” and mitzvas “prishah.” We can understand the significance of Moshe fulfilling these two Mitzvos based on the following Rashi (Shemos 18, 1): **“שְׂקוּל מֹשֶׁה כְּנֶגֶד כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל”**—Moshe was equal to all of Yisrael. Moshe represented the source and essence of all the neshamos of Yisrael. So, by sanctifying himself through these two Mitzvos, he paved the way for all the branches and offshoots of the neshamos of Yisrael to also sanctify themselves.

HKB”H Was Enveloped in the Suffering of the Bush prior to Giving the Torah to Yisrael

Continuing along this exalted path, let us endeavor to explain—with the utmost reverence and adoration—why Moshe Rabeinu yearned to draw nearer to HKB”H—Who rested His Shechinah in a fiery flame within the bush. He remarked to himself: **“אִסוּרָה נָא”**—ואראה את המראה הגדול הזה מדוע לא יבער הסנה—“he was fascinated and wished to understand why the bush would not be consumed by the fire. First, however, let us explain why, in truth, HKB”H chose to rest His Shechinah within the bush. Let us recall Rashi’s well-known comment: **“מִתּוֹךְ הַסְּנֶה, וְלֹא אֵילָן אַחַר מִשׁוֹם עִמּוֹ אֲנִי בְּצָרָה”**—from within the thorn-bush and not in any other tree, in order to convey the message that “I am with him in distress.” In other words, this particular bush was full of thorns. Simply put, HKB”H wanted Moshe to know that He suffered along with Yisrael in their exile.

Notwithstanding, we can suggest a much deeper explanation based on the famous statement from the Zohar hakadosh (Acharei Mos 73a): “ג’ דרגין אינן מתקשרן דא בדא קוב”ה אורייתא וישאל” — these three are intimately intertwined—HKB”H, the Torah and Yisrael. Additionally, the Shela hakadosh (Korach) writes in the name of the kabbalists that the number of Jewish neshamos present in any generation equals 600,000—which are sustained by the 600,000 letters of the Torah. The Megaleh Amukos (186) adds a beautiful allusion reinforcing this idea. The name **יש ששים** is an acronym for **יש ששים ליתורה**—alluding to the fact that each member of Yisrael corresponds to a specific letter in the Torah.

We see, therefore, that the Torah is the source of life for Yisrael. We express this idea daily in the Berachos preceding krias shema at night: “כי הם חיינו ואורך ימינו ובהם נהגה יומם ולילה” —for they are our life and the length of our days and will occupy ourselves with them day and night. Thus, we can deduce that during the exile in Mitzrayim, prior to receiving the Torah, Yisrael suffered on two accounts: (1) not only due to the physical slavery and exile, but also due to (2) the spiritual exile of the neshamos that had yet to receive the Torah—their true source of life.

For this reason, HKB”H rested His Shechinah within the thorn-bush to convey the message: “עמו אנכי בצרה” —I am with him in distress. For, HKB”H also suffered, so to speak, so long as Yisrael had not yet received the Torah. After all, HKB”H, the Torah and Yisrael are intimately connected. This relationship is reflected by the Gemara’s statement (Berachos 8a): “מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב”ה בעולמו אלא ארבע” —since the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, HKB”H has nothing in his world but four cubits of halachah. Hence, in the absence of Torah scholarship, HKB”H suffers, as well.

“And I will see this great sight”—the Fire of Torah Located within the Thorn Bush

We can now appreciate why Moshe Rabeinu longed so earnestly to draw nearer to Hashem. He saw that HKB”H rested His Shechinah in a fiery flame within the thorn-bush and yet the bush was not consumed. He perceived that this phenomenon was due to the fact that HKB”H shared in Yisrael’s suffering—agonizing over the fact that they had yet to receive the Torah. He also perceived via “ruach hakodesh” that he was the one designated to go up onto Har Sinai and receive the Torah for Yisrael.

Consequently, he immediately beseeched Hashem: **אסורה** “אין נא אלא לשון בקשה” —Master of the Universe, give me permission to come nearer to you; “ואראה את המראה הגדול הזה” —and allow me to behold the fire of the Torah that is with HKB”H—for, HKB”H and the Torah are one. He continued to pour out his pure heart with merciful pleas: “מדוע לא יבער הסנה” —why has the time not yet arrived for the bush of thorns to be consumed and eliminated from the world? Why must HKB”H continue to suffer over the fact that Yisrael have not yet received the Torah? Rather, let Him give them the Torah so that the three-ply string—HKB”H, Torah and Yisrael—will not unravel quickly.

To this end the Torah states: “וירא ה’ כי סר לראות” —HKB”H saw that Moshe wished to ascend to the top of the mountain where HKB”H rested within the burning bush, in order to receive the Torah for Yisrael. **ויקרא אליו אלקים מתוך הסנה ויאמר משה משה ויאמר** “הנני, ויאמר אל תקרב הלום” —G-d called out to him, warning him not to come any closer, informing him that he was not yet worthy to do so—as he would be in the future at the time of Matan Torah, when he would climb into the foggy mist where G-d was located.

Nevertheless, since he desired so passionately to minimize HKB”H’s suffering, HKB”H provided him with the beginning of the remedy. He allowed him to begin the preparation for receiving the Torah with the equivalent of the mitzvah of “hagbalah” —“do not come any closer to this site”—and the equivalent of the mitzvah of “prishah” —“remove your shoes from your feet”—implying that he should separate from his wife. **כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת** “קודש הוא” —for you are standing on holy ground, and in the merit of these two Mitzvos, you will receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael in the future, on this very spot.

We now comprehend the amazing comparison between the revelation of the burning bush and the revelation of Matan Torah. The mountain was ablaze on both occasions. During the revelation of the burning bush, however, the fire burned within the bush; while at Matan Torah the mountain was consumed with fire without the thorn-bush. This important difference can be explained as follows: at the time of the revelation of the burning thorn-bush, HKB”H was engrossed in suffering and distress over the fact that Yisrael had not yet received the Torah. Yet, at the time of Matan Torah, when HKB”H descended to give Yisrael the Torah, He suffered no longer within the confines of the thorn-bush.

Donated by Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb

For the Refua shelema of Refael Gavriel Simcha Chaim Ben shulamit

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com