

Parsha Ponders

Va'eira | January 19, 2023 | 26 Teves 5783

To be as great as Moshe¹

הוא אהרן ומשה אשר אמר יקוק להם הוציאו את-בני ישראל מארץ מצרים על-צבאתם

This is Aharon and Moshe, who Hashem told to take the Jewish people out from the land of Egypt, by their legions²

Our Sages note³ that sometimes Moshe's name appears before Aharon's, and sometimes, like in this week's *parsha*, Aharon's name comes before Moshe's. Why is this? To teach us that the two of them are equal in stature. Now, at first glance, this is astounding. We all know that Moshe was the master of prophets, and the teacher of the entire nation. Through Moshe, we received the Torah. Although Aharon was a mighty giant in his own right, how could we say that he was *equal* to Moshe?

Rav Moshe Feinstein offers two possible explanations. The first is that Aharon was also necessary in the mission to save the Jewish people. Although Moshe's role was greater, since Aharon was no less necessary, they are considered equal. It's like the tiny screw which keeps the car engine from falling out of place. They're both equally necessary to have the car function, even if the engine has a greater role in the movement of the vehicle.

However, Rav Moshe's second suggestion teaches us a fundamental principle in Judaism. Since Aharon surely lived his entire life fully, completely fulfilling Hashem's will to the best of his abilities, he's considered on par with Moshe. Even though Moshe was of a greater stature, which is why he had more responsibilities for the nation as a whole, still, they both did everything they were commanded. They were both given the mission that was fitting for them, and they both passed with flying colors.

With this, we can explain a puzzling account in the *gemarra*⁴. One of the *Ammoraim* left this world, but they were able to resuscitate him. They asked him what he saw in the afterlife. He said he saw a flipped world. The ones on top were on the bottom, and the ones on the bottom were on the top. His father told him that he had seen a clear world, not a flipped one. Now, how can we understand this? We're talking about the afterlife, the World of Truth. What we know of in this world is illusory, and surely what's in that world should be the real reality. Why did he say he saw a flipped world?

However, we can say that he saw that even in the afterlife, those who were known as "on top" in this world still have that reputation in that world. Nevertheless, those who were "on top" are now on a lower level. Those who were "on the bottom" are now on top. He therefore thought this was an upside-down world. His father told him that no, he saw a clear world. Why? Since it is clear that Hashem doesn't act like a tyrant against His people⁵. Those who were small in their natural talents and abilities and nevertheless fulfilled Hashem's will to the best of their extent, they're on top in the World to Come. In contrast, those naturally gifted but who slacked off in their service of G-d, they aren't on top in the world truth.

This lesson can apply to all of us. Regardless of our natural abilities, we have the ability to be as great as Moshe Rabbeinu. All we need to do is try our best.

Good Shabbos

¹ Based on [Darash Moshe](#) to [Exodus](#) 6:26

² [Exodus](#) *loc. cit.*

³ [Tosefta Kerisos](#) 4:7, [Bereishis Rabbah](#) 1:15, [Tanchuma Yashan Bereishis](#) § 14, [Mechilta Masechta D'Pischa](#) § 1, brought by [Rashi](#) to our verse

⁴ [Pesachim](#) 50a; [Bava Basra](#) 10b

⁵ [Avodah Zarah](#) 3a