



## Combining the Fantastic Insights of the Arizal and the Chasam Sofer Moshe Spoke to Pharaoh's Guardian Angel with Permutations of Sacred Names while Aharon Spoke to Pharaoh Directly with Permutations Written in the Torah

In this week's parsha, parshas Vaeira, the Chasam Sofer, zy" a, explains for us brilliantly the nature of the partnership that existed between the two holy brothers—Moshe and Aharon—whom HKB" H sent together to coax Pharaoh, the King of Mitzrayim, to release Yisrael from bondage.

According to the simple explanation, this brotherly partnership was necessary, because Moshe Rabeinu had a speech impediment (see Shemos 4, 10). Hence, HKB" H had Aharon join him as his mouthpiece. Notwithstanding, the Chasam Sofer provides us with a novel insight regarding the partnership of Moshe and Aharon. Here are the pertinent pesukim from this week's parsha (ibid. 6, 28):

"וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם דִּבְרַת ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר אֲנִי ה', דַּבֵּר אֶל פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דוֹבֵר אֵיךְ. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי ה', הֲאֵין אֲנִי עֶרְל שְׂפָתַיִם וְאֵיךְ יִשְׁמַע אֵלַי פַּרְעֹה. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה רֵא אֶת נִתְתִּיךְ אֶלְקִים לַפַּרְעֹה וְאֶהְרֵן אַחֲיֶיךָ יִהְיֶה נְבִיאֲךָ, אֵתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוְךָ, וְאֶהְרֵן אַחֲיֶיךָ יְדַבֵּר אֶל פַּרְעֹה וְשִׁלַּח אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם."

**And it was on the day that Hashem spoke to Moshe in the land of Mitzrayim. Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "I am Hashem. Speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim, everything that say to you." Moshe said to Hashem, "But I have blocked lips, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?" Hashem said to Moshe, "See, I have made you a master over Pharaoh, and Aharon, your brother, will be your spokesman. You will speak everything that I will command you and Aharon,**

**your brother will speak to Pharaoh, that he should send Bnei Yisrael from his land."**

The Chasam Sofer notes that when the passuk says: **"And it was on the day that Hashem spoke to Moshe in the land of Mitzrayim"**—it does not specify what was communicated to Moshe. Additionally, the Chasam Sofer notes that when describing Moshe's role, HKB" H merely says: **"You will speak everything that I will command you"**; however, when describing Aharon's role, HKB" H adds that Pharaoh **"should send Bnei Yisrael from his land."** It seems that HKB" H could have been more concise by simply saying: **"You will speak to Aharon, and he will speak to Pharaoh."** Here is a brief summary of the sacred words of the Chasam Sofer:

First of all, the entire Torah consists of names of HKB" H. So, when Moshe and Aharon stood in front of Pharaoh, performing all of those miraculous feats, Moshe Rabeinu, a" h, had to mention the sacred names emanating from those actual words with kedushah and taharah. For instance, certain sacred names emanate from the words **"he should send Bnei Yisrael from his land"**; however, in the physical world, they are perceived as **"send My people, so they will worship Me,"** and so on and so forth.

Moshe Rabeinu, due to his immense kedushah, and since the Shechinah spoke directly from his throat, the letters were articulated in an orderly fashion as intended coinciding with

those sacred names. Thus, it was impossible for Pharaoh to comprehend that he was being instructed to “send My people.” Instead, they emerged from Moshe’s mouth to Aharon, where they took on a physical form; and Aharon understood that they needed to be articulated in this way. Moshe’s speech conveyed the content of the matter, weakening the force of the klipah and striking it with each plague by uttering these names. Aharon helped Pharaoh comprehend the actual message.

This is the significance of the words: **“On the day that Hashem spoke to Moshe in the land of Mitzrayim.”** This refers to the amazing speech that Hashem placed in Moshe’s mouth in the holiest form. Hence, Moshe claimed that he was speech impaired. In other words, he was saying that his physical lips were incapable of expressing to Pharaoh so that he would comprehend the kedushah of this prophecy. To which HKB”H responded that he would utter all that he was commanded—the actual combinations of names—and his brother, Aharon, would instruct Pharaoh **“to send Bnei Yisrael from his land.”** In other words, from those same combinations (of names), Aharon would (know to) instruct Pharaoh **“to send Bnei Yisrael from his land.”** (These last three paragraphs were a loose translation of the Chasam Sofer.)

### At Its Roots the Torah Is a Combination of Sacred Names

We will elaborate on this wonderful insight based on the Chasam Sofer’s own explanation (Yisro) of a teaching in the Gemara (Shabbas 88b). When Moshe ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah, the malachim objected (Tehillim 8, 2): **“תנה הודך על השמים—bestow Your glory upon the heavens.** They were petitioning HKB”H to give the Torah to them. This is difficult to comprehend, since the malachim themselves surely understood that they are incapable of fulfilling the majority of the Torah’s mitzvos, which require an actual deed. So, how are we to make sense of their request?

He resolves this difficulty by referring to the Midrash (B.R. 8, 2): **“שני אלפים שנה קדמה התורה לברייתו של עולם, הדא הוא דכתיב ואהיה אצלו אמון ואהיה שעשועים יום יום, ויומו של הקב”ה אלף שנים, דכתיב כי אלף שנים בעיניך כיום אתמול.”** **The Torah preceded the creation of the world by two thousand years, as it is written (Mishlei 8, 30): “I was a nursling beside Him, I was then His delight every day, etc.”** Now, one of HKB”H’s days is equal to one

**thousand years, as it is written (Tehillim 90, 4): “For a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday.”** This is seemingly problematic. If the Torah preexisted the world, how does it chronicle the events that occurred after the creation of the world—such as the stories of Adam and Chava, Noach and the generation of the mabul, the lives of the holy Avos, and everything else from the first word of the Torah to the last word?

The answer is that the holy Torah at its roots in the heavens above does not appear as the combinations of letters we are familiar with. It appears as a combination of unique, sacred names. In the words of the Zohar hakadosh (Vayikra 13b): **“דהא אורייתא כולה שמה דקודשא בריך הוא—the Torah is comprised entirely of names of HKB”H.** Since, however, HKB”H wanted to give the Torah specifically to Yisrael, whenever something transpired in this world, the letters realigned and formed the combinations of letters and words that we are familiar with.

We can now make sense of the malachim’s request. They did not yearn to receive the Torah that we are familiar with, which is for the most part irrelevant and inapplicable to them; they were requesting the Torah with the spiritual combinations as it appears in the heavens, before it descended to earth and was transformed into combinations that include practical mitzvos. This was their petition: **“Bestow Your glory upon the heavens.”** They were referring to the glory of the original, spiritual combinations of the Torah in the heavens. They felt that it rightfully belonged to spiritual creatures like themselves rather than to lowly creatures of flesh and blood.

To rebut the malachim’s claim, Moshe asked: **“רבנונו של עולם, תורה שאתה נותן לי מה כתיב בה—Master of the Universe, what is written in the Torah that You are giving me?** In other words, he conceded that the malachim are indeed more capable of understanding the heavenly combination of letters; however, the Torah that Hashem was giving to him contained combinations related to practical mitzvos, which apply exclusively to physical human beings. This, in fact, is the true glory of Hashem—that even lowly creatures of flesh and blood are able to overcome the yetzer hara and worship Him. As for the malachim, they lack a yetzer hara; so, when they perform mitzvos in a spiritual manner, it does not glorify HKB”H to the same degree.

## Aharon Inclined His Ear and Overheard What Was Spoken

This explains the remarks of the Chasam Sofer beautifully. When Moshe Rabeinu addressed Pharaoh, he did not utter the combinations of words that are recorded in the Torah. He uttered the combinations of sacred names that appear in the Torah in the heavens above. For, those sacred names have the power to subjugate the klipah of Mitzrayim. Aharon HaKohen, however, perceived from what Moshe said, the words that he was supposed to relate to Pharaoh—the words that are recorded in our Torahs. Thus, Pharaoh understood that HKB”H was commanding him to release Yisrael from bondage in Mitzrayim.

It is with this understanding that the Chasam Sofer interprets the opening passuk: **“And it was on the day that Hashem spoke to Moshe in the land of Mitzrayim”**—that He spoke to Moshe the combinations of sacred names that would subjugate the klipah of Pharaoh and Mitzrayim. In this manner, he also interprets the passuk: **Hashem said to Moshe, “See, I have made you a master over Pharaoh, and Aharon, your brother, will be your spokesman.** (Now, HKB”H provides clarification) **You will speak everything that I will command you** (uttering the combinations of sacred names aimed at weakening the klipah of Mitzrayim) **and Aharon, your brother will speak to Pharaoh** (comprehensible combinations of words conveying HKB”H’s command), **that he should send Bnei Yisrael from his land.”**

This explains very nicely the interpretation of the Targum YoNasan: **“וזהו ביומא דמליל ה’ עם משה בארעא דמצרים, הוה אהרן וזהו ביומא דמליל ה’ עם משה בארעא דמצרים, הוה אהרן”**—and it was, on the day that Hashem spoke to Moshe in the land of Mitzrayim, Aharon would incline his ear and overhear what He said to him. We will endeavor to explain how he deduces the fact that Aharon inclined his ear to overhear what Hashem said to Moshe.

According to the explanation of the Chasam Sofer, the passuk teaches that HKB”H spoke to Moshe combinations of sacred names that he was to utter in the presence of Pharaoh. Therefore, it was necessary for the Targum YoNasan to add the following: Aharon had to incline his ear in order to decipher from the combinations spoken to Moshe Rabeinu what words he was meant to relate to Pharaoh—i.e., combinations of words that Pharaoh would be able to understand.

## The Amazing Revelation of the Arizal: Moshe Spoke to Pharaoh’s Guardian Angel Above

I had a wonderful idea! I would like to clarify the sacred remarks of the Arizal based on the remarks of the Chasam Sofer. The Arizal addresses the following passuk in this week’s parsha (Shemos 6, 11): **“בא דבר אל פרעה מלך מצרים וישלח את בני ישראל—come speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim, that he send Bnei Yisrael from his land.** We find the following pertinent passage in the Midrash (S.R. 6, 5): **“בא דבר אל פרעה מלך מצרים, המשל אומר, מן שטיא לית הנייא אלא מן קציא.”** **“Come speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim.” The parable says: From a fool, it is impossible to benefit, but only from a commanding officer.** The commentaries struggle to make sense of this Midrash. However, we find an intriguing explanation in the sacred teachings of the Arizal in the sefer Machberet HaKodesh. Here is what he says:

To comprehend this parable and why they taught it in relation to this passuk, we must refer to that which is written in the Zohar (Bo 37b). Why does it say **“Come (to Pharaoh),”** it should say **“Go to Pharaoh”?** However, it teaches that HKB”H elevated Moshe to the heavenly chambers. For, sometimes the Torah simply writes Pharaoh without the title of king; but here, in this passuk, it says **“king.”** Because there is a lower Pharaoh (down on earth), who spoke with Moshe; regarding him it says: **“Come to Pharaoh.”** There is also a Pharaoh above, and he is the king and commander of the lower Pharaoh.

Hence, when he wanted to speak with the guardian angel above, he called him king, as it is written here: **“Come speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim.”** This implies that the Blessed One brought Moshe up to the upper Pharaoh to speak to him there in those chambers to see if he would perhaps repent. In that case, the lower Pharaoh would also be eliminated.

This is the meaning of the statement in the Midrash: **“There is no benefit from a fool.”** For, the lower Pharaoh is an imbecile and a fool and did not heed Moshe, because Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. And the liver gets angry in keeping with the passuk (Koheles 7, 9): **“For anger lingers in the bosom of fools.”** Since the fool did not listen to Moshe, the Blessed One said to Moshe, **“Leave this fool, there is no benefit to be derived from him. Come speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim.”** He was suggesting that perhaps there might be some benefit in speaking to the king, guardian angel and commander of

Mitzrayim. This is what the Midrash means when it says: **“But only from an officer”**—referring to the commander and king. (This concludes the translation of the Arizal.)

Thus, we learn from the Arizal that when HKB”H instructs Moshe Rabeinu: **“Come speak with Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim”**—he was being ordered to address the guardian angel of Pharaoh above, who is the real King of Mitzrayim. This then is the lesson of the parable in the Midrash: There is no purpose or benefit in speaking with the Pharaoh down below, because he is a fool. Therefore, it is worthwhile addressing his commander and guardian angel above.

### **HKB”H Inflicted the Plagues upon the Ministering Angel of Pharaoh with the Sacred Names**

In truth, this is extremely baffling. After all, HKB”H ended up hardening Pharaoh’s heart and resolve, so that he would not release Bnei Yisrael, and he would be subjected to the miraculous feats and plagues, as it states (Shemos 10, 1): **“וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל פַּרְעֹה כִּי אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת לְבוֹ וְאֵת לֵב עַבְדֵּי לִמְעַן וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל פַּרְעֹה כִּי אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת לְבוֹ וְאֵת לֵב עַבְדֵּי לִמְעַן”**—Hashem said to Moshe, **“Come to Pharaoh, because I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, so that I can put these signs of Mine in his midst.** That being the case, why did HKB”H send Moshe to speak to the guardian angel of Pharaoh above?

It appears that we can make sense of the Arizal’s explanation by referring to what we learned from the sacred teachings of the Chasam Sofer. He taught us that HKB”H ordered Moshe Rabeinu to speak to Pharaoh using combinations of sacred names aimed at subjugating his klipah and tumah. Aharon, on the other hand, transmitted the message to the Pharaoh down below with combinations of words and letters that would make him understand that HKB”H was commanding him to release Yisrael from Mitzrayim.

Additionally, let us introduce a passage from the Midrash Tanchuma (Beshalach 13) related to Shiras HaYam (ibid. 15, 1): **“סוס ורוכבו רמה בים, שראה שרה של מצרים נופל, וכן את מוצא שאין”** הקב”ה נפרע מן האומות לעתיד לבוא עד שנפרע משריהם תחילה, שנאמר והיה **“A horse and its rider, He heaved into the sea,”** indicating that **He saw the ministering angel of Mitzrayim fall. Similarly, you find that HKB”H does not exact punishment from the**

**nations le’asid la’vo until punishment is first exacted from their ministering angels, as it states (Yeshayah 24, 21): “And on that day Hashem will issue a command to the high army on high, and to the kings of the earth on the earth.”**

This illuminates for us the words of the Arizal. Precisely because HKB”H wished to inflict the “makkos” upon Pharaoh down on earth, He first sent Moshe Rabeinu to speak to the heavenly counterpart of Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim, employing combinations of sacred names. In this manner, the “makkos” struck the ministering angel of Pharaoh above, thereby weakening the klipah of Mitzrayim. As a consequence, HKB”H later inflicted the actual “makkos” upon Pharaoh and his people down below. That was in a sense a foreshadowing of the events that will occur in the future: **“And on that day Hashem will issue a command to the high army on high, and to the kings of the earth on the earth.”**

This then is the Arizal’s interpretation of the Midrash: **“Come speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim.”** **The parable says: From a fool, it is impossible to benefit, but only from a commanding officer.** It served no purpose to mention the combinations of sacred names as they appear above to the foolish Pharaoh down below; they would have been incomprehensible to him. Therefore, it was worthwhile uttering them to his ministering angel and commander above. As the ministering angel of Mitzrayim, he was the source of their power and tumah. Upon hearing the sacred names which inflicted him with the “makkos,” he faltered and submitted beneath the wings of kedushah. Thus, it was possible to visit the “makkos” upon Pharaoh down below.

### **A Wonderful Explanation from the Imrei Yosef**

It is with great pleasure that we will now enjoy the sacred words of the Imrei Yosef. He presents the Arizal’s concept that wherever HKB”H commands Moshe to speak to **“Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim,”** He is referring to the ministering angel above. Then, he applies it magnificently to the passage in our parsha (ibid. 6, 10):

**Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, “Come speak to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, that he send Bnei Yisrael from his land.” Moshe spoke before Hashem, saying, “Behold, Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me, so how will**

**Pharaoh listen to me? And I have a speech impediment (blocked lips). Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding Bnei Yisrael and regarding Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to take Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Egypt.**

The Ohr HaChaim hakadosh asks the following question: We see that Moshe Rabeinu presented Hashem with a “kal vachomer”: If Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me, how can I expect Pharaoh to listen to me? Yet, we do not find in the narrative that HKB”H responds to Moshe’s question. Furthermore, if HKB”H did not intend to respond to Moshe’s protestation, then why does HKB”H repeat His command: **“Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding Bnei Yisrael and regarding Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to take Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Egypt”?**

To explain the matter, he introduces the comments of the holy Maggid of Kozhnitz, zy”a, in Avodas Yisrael (Ha’azinu) related to the passuk (Devarim 32, 1):

**“Hearken, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth.” When a tzaddik wishes to return the people of his generation to good standing, and he constantly speaks words of “mussar” to them; yet, his words fail to penetrate their hearts, because their hearts are made of stone, due their numerous transgressions; and they have become attached to the klipah, chas v’shalom, G-d help us; it is advisable that he speak “mussar” to the root of their neshamos, where the klipah has no hold. This is the meaning of “Hearken, O heavens, and I will speak”—that is, to the root of the neshamos, which are called “heavens”; as a result, “the earth will hear the words of my mouth”—referring to man’s material being.**

This teaches us a valuable lesson. If Pharaoh could be influenced and affected by addressing his ministering angel above—thereby shattering its klipah below; then, not to compare the two by any means, the same can be applied to Yisrael. To influence them in a positive manner, it is possible to speak to the heavenly roots of their neshamos, in keeping with the passuk: **“האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי”**—**“Hearken, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth.”**

## **HKB”H Commanded Moshe Rabeinu to Speak to the Roots of the Neshamos of Yisrael**

Let us return to the “kal vachomer” presented by Moshe: **“Behold, Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?”** The commentaries ask an obvious question: The Torah explains why Bnei Yisrael did not heed Moshe; it was because of the intense labor of their enslavement, as it says (Shemos 6, 9): **“ולא שמעו אל משה מקוצר רוח—ומעבודה קשה”**—**and they did not listen to Moshe because of shortness of breath and hard labor.** Pharaoh, however, was not being oppressed or subjected to intense labor. So, perhaps he would listen to Moshe.

The great Rabbi of Lublin, zy”a, provides us with an explanation in Divrei Emes based on the well-known fact that due to their exposure in Mitzrayim to the tumah of the Egyptians, Yisrael sank to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of tumah. This, in fact, was Pharaoh’s intent when he said (ibid. 1, 10): **“הבה נתחכמה לו”**. **“Come, let us act wisely with him, lest he become numerous . . . The Egyptians enslaved Bnei Yisrael with back-breaking labor.** Pharaoh thought that by subjecting Yisrael to intense labor, they would sink to the 50<sup>th</sup> level of tumah and, as a consequence, would never be able to leave Mitzrayim. This then is the implication of the passuk: **“And they did not listen to Moshe because of shortness of breath and hard labor.”** As a result of the harsh enslavement, they sank to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of tumah making them incapable of heeding Moshe’s words of kedushah.

We can now make sense of Moshe’s “kal vachomer”: **“Behold, Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me.”** At their roots, Bnei Yisrael’s neshamos are holy, since they descend from Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Nevertheless, they failed to heed Moshe, because they had sunk to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of tumah due to Pharaoh’s back-breaking slave labor. **“So, how will Pharaoh listen to me—I, whose lips are blocked?”** Pharaoh, in contrast, is the root of tumah; so, he most certainly will not heed my words!

In this vein, the Imrei Yosef interprets the continuation of the text: **“Come speak to Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim, that he send Bnei Yisrael from his land.”** Here, HKB”H specifies that Moshe speak with **“Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim,”** indicating (according to the Arizal) that he was to address the

ministering angel of Pharaoh in the heavens. Moshe, however, did not immediately grasp HKB”H’s intent; hence: **“Moshe spoke before Hashem, saying, ‘Behold, Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me,’”** because they have sunk to the 49<sup>th</sup> level of tumah due to their enslavement by Pharaoh. **“So, how will Pharaoh—the actual root of tumah—listen to me?”**

Therefore, HKB”H made His intent clear to Moshe: **“Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding Bnei Yisrael”**—He instructed them to speak directly to the roots of the neshamos of Bnei Yisrael up above, where they remained untainted and unaffected by the tumah of Mitzrayim; **“and regarding Pharaoh, King of**

**Egypt”**—HKB”H instructed them to speak to Pharaoh’s root, his ministering angel, who is called the King of Egypt—**“to take Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Egypt.”**

Thus, by addressing the roots of the neshamos of Yisrael in the heavens, Yisrael down below would also heed the voice of Hashem, in keeping with the passuk: **“Hearken, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth.”** And by speaking directly to the heavenly root of the King of Mitzrayim and eliminating his power above, they would, in effect, also shatter the force of his klipah below. It turns out, therefore, that with these words, HKB”H responded explicitly to Moshe Rabeinu’s “kal vachomer.”



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