



## Vaeyra – Choose Wisely

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Over the course of the last two *Parshios*, Moshe and Aharon have emerged as the men who would lead the Jewish people to freedom. The Torah records a shortened genealogy for the tribes of Reuven, Shimon and Levi in order to show us the generational greatness from which Moshe and Aharon descended. In a way, this familial greatness provides their “credentials” for their newly appointed leadership positions. However, when we were introduced to Moshe in last week’s Parsha the Torah does not mention the names of Moshe’s parents. The verse states: “*A man of the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi (Shemos 2:1).*” If genealogy is indeed so important that the Torah interrupted the narrative (in this week’s Parsha), why not convey complete familial information when we are first introduced to the future savior of the Jewish people?

To answer this question we must look at the event that forever changed Moshe’s life. Moshe was out shepherding Yisro’s flocks when he saw the bush that burned but was not consumed. And it is there that God told Moshe: *So now come, and I will send you to Pharaoh, and take My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt (Shemos 3:10).*” Moshe resisted, he didn’t feel worthy of such an assignment, after all he was but a simple shepherd. Furthermore, he was not sure if the people were salvageable. Moshe turned to God and said: *“Behold I come to the children of Israel, and I say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “Ehyeh asher ehyeh (I will be what I will be),” and He said, “So shall you say to the children of Israel, ‘Ehyeh (I will be) has sent me to you (Shemos 3:13-14).”*” God is known by many names. Each Divine name is descriptive and highlights a specific Divine trait or attribute. Why would God identify Himself using such an ambiguous, non-descript name? The question is compounded in light of the fact that this will be His first “introduction” to the Jewish nation.

Rav Kalonymous Kalmish Shapiro (1889-1943), the Rebbe of Piacezna in his moving work titled, *Eish Kodesh* explains that man often defines himself by his past and present actions. My identity is forged by what I have and am presently doing. God has the unique ability to see us not only for what we were or what we are - He has the ability to see us for what we can become. God says to Moshe, *“When you look in the mirror all you see is a simple shepherd – I see the man who will become the greatest prophet the world will ever know. When you look at the people- you see a nation of embittered and broken souls – I see the men, women and children who will say, Naaseh V’nishma (we will do and we will listen) at the foot of Mount Sinai. So if the people ask you who has sent you? Tell them, the God who believes you will be what you choose to be, the God who sees what you can become, the God who believes in you - has sent me here to help you become a free nation.”* *Ehyeh asher ehyeh, I will be what I will be*, is not simply a Divine name; it is the ultimate Divine hope and aspiration for each of us. This is to become the mantra of the Jewish nation. God wants each of us to know *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, I will be what I will be – I will become what I choose to become. I determine the kind of person I will be and the nature of the life I will lead. I may not be able to control all the circumstances of my existence – but I can determine the quality, meaning, holiness and direction of who and what I become. I will be what I choose to be.*

Perhaps, this is why Moshe’s parents are not mentioned by name when we are first introduced to the future savior. Had the Torah told us that Moshe’s father was Amram, I might have thought that it was solely Amram’s influence that shaped Moshe. Moshe was the son of a great man and it must have been that paternal greatness which influenced his spiritual maturation. Had the Torah related that Yocheved was Moshe’s mother, one might have thought that it was in the merit of having a mother who was the daughter of Levi and a selfless mid-wife to countless Jewish women that Moshe rose to such spiritual heights. But the truth is, as much as Moshe’s parents may have influenced and informed his maturation and growth – Moshe became the greatest prophet of all time because he made a conscious decision to become more. At first he resisted his destiny, but ultimately he embraced it. Moshe decided to actualize the Divine mandate of *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh; I will be what I choose to be*. Moshe made the decision to be more and that is why he became more.

There are many things in life we don’t get to choose. There are many circumstances which are imposed upon us as a result of external realities. But we do maintain the ability to make the most important life choice. We have the power and privilege to say *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh; I will be what I choose to be*. Let us find the courage to choose wisely.