

Parshas Beha’alotcha

Humility and Prophecy

In relation to the degree of Moshe’s prophecy, the Torah describes Moshe as the most humble of all men. This Sicha analyzes the trait of humility as it relates to prophecy and explains why it is specifically humility that leads to the Divine Spirit.

This week’s *parsha* recounts the tremendous humility of Moshe *Rabeinu*.

The verse describing his greatness is recounted in the midst of G-d’s response to the derogatory remarks of Miriam and Aharon’s regarding their brother Moshe.

They were bothered as to why Moshe had separated from his wife. As a response, G-d demonstrated to them the awesome manner in which his G-dly presence was revealed to Moshe.

The Torah tells us,

Text 1

Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe regarding the Cushite woman he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. They said, "Has the Lord spoken only to Moshe? Hasn't He spoken to us too?" And the Lord heard. Now this man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth. The Lord suddenly said to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, "Go out, all three of you, to the Tent of Meeting!" And all three went out. The Lord descended in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tent. He called to Aharon and Miriam, and they both went out. He said, "Please listen to My words. If there be prophets among you, [I] the Lord will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak to him in a dream. Not so is My servant Moshe; he is faithful throughout

My house. With him I speak mouth to mouth; in a vision and not in riddles, and he beholds the image of the Lord. So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moshe?

Bamidbar 12:1-8

By “The Lord suddenly” appearing to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, He demonstrated the constant state of readiness which was required from Moshe to receive the frequent Divine revelations.

The verse then goes on to describe the prophecy of Moshe and the manner in which it was greater than any other prophet. For, while by other prophets G-d appears to them when they are in a dreamlike state and in riddles, Moshe *Rabeinu* perceived G-d in person and with direct communication.

G-d’s introduction to describing the level of Moshe’s prophecy is his unparalleled humility. From the fact that this is the prelude to the depiction of the prophecy, it is understood that it was *because* of this humility that Moshe merited to this tremendous level of prophecy.

Traits of prophecy

The Talmud describes the prerequisites for prophecy as follows:

Text 2

R. Yochanan said: “The Holy One, blessed be He, causes His Divine Presence to rest only upon he who is strong, wealthy, wise and humble; and all these [qualifications] are deduced from Moshe. Strong, for it is written¹, ‘And he spread abroad the tent over the Tabernacle;’ and a Master said, ‘Moshe our teacher spread it;’ and it is also written, ‘Ten cubits shall be the length of the board...’ Wealthy, [as it is written²] ‘Hew thee,’ [interpreted] the chips be thine. Wise: for Rav and Shmuel both said, ‘Fifty gates of understanding were created in the world, and all but one were given to Moshe, for it is said, “For thou hast made him [i.e. Moshe] a little lower than G-d.”’ Humble, for it is written³, ‘Now the man Moshe was very humble.’”

Talmud, Nedarim 38a

While from the above piece of Talmud it would seem that the characteristics of might, wealth, wisdom and humility are all equal prerequisites to prophecy, from the fact that the above verse in this week’s Torah portion only mentions the trait of humility, it is understood that humility is more directly linked with prophecy than the other traits.

Humility: the key trait

This is understood as well from another statement in Talmud:

Text 3

R. Pinchas b. Yair said: “Study leads to precision, precision leads to zeal, zeal leads to cleanliness, cleanliness leads to restraint, restraint leads to purity, purity leads to holiness, holiness leads to

humility, humility leads to fear of sin, fear of sin leads to saintliness, saintliness leads to the [possession of] the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads to life eternal, and saintliness is greater than any of these, for Scripture says: ‘Then did You speak in vision to Your saintly ones.’ This, then, differs from the view of R. Yehoshua b. Levy. For R. Yehoshua b. Levy said: ‘Humility is the greatest of them all, for Scripture says⁴, “The spirit of the Lord G-d is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings unto the humble.” It does not say, “unto the saints”, but “unto the humble”, from which you learn that humility is the greatest of all these.’”

Talmud, Avoda Zara 20b

According to the latter opinion of R. Yehoshua b. Levi that “humility is the greatest of them all,” and that it “leads to the Holy Spirit,” it is understood that it is not akin to the other traits of strength, wealth and wisdom, but that it is specifically humility that leads to the Holy Spirit.

Humility is not merely a *prerequisite* to prophecy, but it actually *leads* to it. As the above Talmudic statement says, “Study *leads* to precision, precision *leads* to zeal, zeal *leads* to cleanliness, cleanliness *leads* to restraint etc.”

Each trait is therefore not only a facilitator for the next, making its acquisition possible, but actually brings upon and directly leads to the following step.

This idea of humility being directly linked with prophecy is clear from yet a third Talmudic statement. The Talmud relates as follows:

¹ Shemos 40:9.

² Shemos 34:1.

³ Bamidbar 12:3.

⁴ Yeshaya 61:1.

Text 4

When Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi died, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel; nevertheless they made use of the *Bas Kol* (Heavenly voice). On one occasion [some Rabbis] were sitting in the upper chamber of Gurya's house in Yericho; a *Bas Kol* was granted to them from Heaven which announced, "There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it." They all looked at Hillel the Elder; and when he died, they lamented over him, 'Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man! Disciple of Ezra!' On another occasion they were sitting in an upper chamber in Yavneh; a *Bas Kol* was granted to them from Heaven which announced, "There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the *Shechina* should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it." They all looked at Shmuel the Little; and when he died, they lamented over him, "Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man! Disciple of Hillel!"

Talmud, Sota 48b

When they wished to express the trait that made Hillel and Shmuel the Little worthy of prophecy, they expressed the tremendous humility that these two sages had. From the fact that their humility was stressed as opposed to any of the other original qualities attributed to prophecy (strength, wealth or wisdom), it is understood that it is primarily humility that leads to prophecy.

From the previously mentioned ideas it can be concluded that there are two aspects in humility: (a) it is *equal* to the other perquisites of prophecy and (b) it actually *leads* to prophecy.

Alas, the humble! Alas, the pious!

We can understand the different aspects of humility through analyzing a curious variation in the otherwise similar accounts regarding Hillel and Shmuel the Little.

Both of the stories begin with recounting how a *Bas Kol* expressed that "there is in your midst one man who is deserving that the *Shechina* should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it." The difference is however, in the expressions of their eulogies upon their passing.

Upon the passing of Hillel the Sages declared, "Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man!" They first mentioned his piety and then his humility. Yet, upon the passing of Shmuel the Little, he was eulogized as, "Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man!" Here, the first mention was his humility and afterwards his piety.

The commentators explain that the reason that the Sages mentioned humility and piety in general, is because both of them are traits that lead to the Holy Spirit, as can be seen in the Talmudic statement quoted above ("saintliness leads to the [possession of] the Holy Spirit ...)

This, then, differs from the view of R. Yehoshua b. Levy. For R. Yehoshua b. Levy said, "Humility is the greatest of them all." Essentially then, there is a disagreement as to whether it is piety that leads to the Holy Spirit or if it is humility that leads to the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. As expressed by one of the commentators,

Text 5

This that it states in reference to Hillel and Shmuel the Little that they were eulogized with, "Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man," in reference to the Divine Presence of which they were worthy that it rest upon them, is because

these two traits lead to the Holy Spirit. This can be seen in the first chapter of the (Talmudic) Tractate Avoda Zara⁵, that there is one view which holds that piety is the greatest trait and there is another view which is of the opinion that humility is the greatest trait.

Chidushei Agados MaHarSha, Sanhedrin 11b

Accordingly, it can be explained that this peculiar differentiation is in correspondence with the argument that we saw above (Text 3) between R. Pinchas b. Yair and R. Yehoshua b. Levy, as to whether piety is greater than humility or vice versa.

Based on this it follows, that those that eulogized Hillel saying, “Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man,” are of the opinion that humility is the greater trait. The reason being, that they began their eulogy with the lesser trait of piety, and concluded it by further adding that not only was he pious but he was humble as well.

Those that eulogized Shmuel the Little saying, “Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man,” however, are of the opinion that piety is the greater trait. They therefore commenced with the lesser trait of humility and concluded with the greater trait of piety.

The humble pious man

The trouble with explaining the difference of the two traits in above manner, in the way that Hillel and Shmuel the Little were eulogized based on the difference of opinion held by the eulogizers as to whether piety is greater than humility or vice versa, is that this story is brought in the Jerusalem Talmud as well, and there the Talmud makes no differentiation in the way that these two sages were eulogized.

⁵ 20b.

Text 6

On one occasion the Elders entered [the home] of Bas Gadya in Yericho; a *Bas Kol* went out which announced to them, “There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the Holy Spirit should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it.” They all looked at Hillel the elder and when he died, they lamented over him, “Alas, the humble pious man, disciple of Ezra!” On another occasion the Elders entered the upper chamber in Yavneh and a *Bas Kol* went out which announced to them, “There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the Holy Spirit should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it.” They all looked at Shmuel the Little. And why was he called the little? Because he would make himself small. Others say that it was because he was a little smaller than Shmuel *HaRamasi* (Shmuel the Prophet). And when he died, they lamented over him, “Alas, the humble pious man, disciple of Hillel the elder!”

Jerusalem Talmud, Sota 9:13

From this that the Jerusalem Talmud formulates the eulogy differently, and expressed these traits equally concerning both sages, it is clear that there was no difference of opinion by the eulogizers as to whether the quality of piety or humility is greater. (Regarding both the rabbis in the Jerusalem Talmud placed humility before piety.)

Rather, the meaning behind the Babylonian Talmud’s difference in expression in regard to the eulogies of Hillel and Shmuel the Little must be based on the respective levels of greatness that the two of them reached. It was because Hillel was greater than his student Shmuel the Little that he was eulogized in a different manner than him.

The paradigm of humility

When the trait of humility is described in the Talmud, Hillel is used as the paradigm. Among the various stories that the Talmud brings to describe Hillel's supreme humility and gentle nature is the following, which expresses his humility even to a Gentile who seemed to be scoffing the Torah:

Text 7

Our Rabbis taught: "A man should always be humble like Hillel, and not exacting like Shammai.... A certain heathen once came before Shammai and asked him, 'How many Toros have you?' 'Two,' he replied: 'the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.' 'I believe you with respect to the Written, but not with respect to the Oral Torah; make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the Written Torah [only].' [But] he scolded and repulsed him in anger. When he went before Hillel, he accepted him as a proselyte. On the first day, he taught him *Alef, Bes, Gimmel, Daled*; the following day he reversed [them] to him. 'But yesterday you did not teach them to me thus,' he protested. 'Must you then not rely upon me? Then rely upon me with respect to the Oral [Torah] too.'"

Talmud, Shabbos 30b-31a

The Talmud there expresses three stories of Gentiles whose desire to convert seemed incredulous, yet Hillel taught them with humility and patience. Once, all three of them came together and remarked: "Shammai's exactness sought to drive us from the world, but Hillel's humility brought us under the wings of the *Shechina*."

While Hillel's humility is famous and there are many stories that describe it, the trait of humility

of his student Shmuel the Little was not as pronounced.

Concerning Shmuel the Jerusalem Talmud stated above, "Why was he called 'the little?' Because he would make himself small." While Hillel was tremendously humble, Shmuel was called humble because he would make himself small—a level not as great as Hillel, who was well known for lowering himself for others with his humility.

It is because Hillel's humility surpassed that of Shmuel the Little that when he was eulogized, they Rabbis said, "Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man," first mentioning his piety and only then his humility. Concerning his student Shmuel the Little, who was at a lower level of humility, they said "Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man," first mentioning his lesser trait of humility and then his greater trait of piety.

The Jerusalem Talmud

In the Jerusalem Talmud there are two (basic) discrepancies in the way that this story is told over from the way it is recounted in the Babylonian Talmud.

The first variance is in the way the G-dly revelation is described:

Babylonian: "There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the *Shechina* should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it."

Jerusalem: "There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the **Holy Spirit** should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it."

The second variance is in regard to the manner in which they expressed the two sages' piety and humility (as was described):

Babylonian: "They lamented over him, '**Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man!** Disciple of Ezra!' ...they lamented over him, '**Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man!** Disciple of Hillel!'

Jerusalem: “they lamented over him, “**Alas, the humble pious man**, disciple of Ezra!’ ...they lamented over him, “**Alas, the humble pious man**, disciple of Hillel the elder!”

These two differences are not only superficial but are actually dependent on one another.

Levels of humility

In the trait of humility itself there are various levels, which can be generally categorized into three:

1. The individual does not feel any of his greatness in considering himself *better* than others. This means to say, that although he is aware of his qualities that make him greater than other individuals, this does not make him haughty. He knows that all his qualities are a gift from G-d, and that if another would be given these same traits, they would be at his level and perhaps even greater.
2. Not only is the individual not haughty, he actually feels that he is lower than others. He does not feel that the other would *possibly* be greater than himself, were he to have his strengths. He is *sure* that they would be greater than him. He feels that he has squandered his gift from G-d and another would not.
3. This individual is not only humble in theory, in that he is aware that others would reach greater heights than himself, were they to be given his gifts—he is humble in *action* as well. He actually lowers himself to deal with those that are on a deplorable rank. This is akin to G-d’s humility: Although G-d is most definitely greater than all of creation, and His humility is not expressed in that He believes so to speak

that others would be greater than Himself, nevertheless, G-d lowers Himself, as the verse states⁶, “With the lofty and the holy ones I dwell, and with the crushed and humble in spirit.” So too, this individual, because of his humility, involves himself with people who are seemingly below his dignity.

A segue to prophecy

As was determined above, humility is a requisite and segue to prophecy. It is therefore understood that one’s level of prophecy that they reach is in accordance with the type or level of humility that they possess, according to the above three levels.

The requisite of humility for an expression of G-dliness is not only concerning prophecy or the Holy Spirit, but for any expression of the Divine Presence. In order for the Divine Presence to be revealed, there must be humility.

This includes a G-dly revelation such as⁷, “upon every gathering of ten [Jews] the *Shechina* rests,” or⁸, “when a single individual sits and engages in the Torah the *Shechina* rests on him.” This dwelling can take place only when there is the precondition of humility.

Text 8

For the holy side is nothing but the indwelling and extension of the holiness of the Holy One, blessed be He, and He dwells only on such a thing that abnegates itself completely to Him, either actually, as in the case of the angels above, or potentially, as in the case of every Jew down below, having the capacity to abnegate himself completely to the Holy One, blessed be He, through martyrdom for the sanctification of G-d.

Tanya, Ch. 6

⁶ Yeshayah 57:15.

⁷ Talmud, Sanhedrin 39a.

⁸ Pirkei Avos 3:6; Tanya, Ch. 6.

This is in essence the **first level** of humility. It is not that the humility *brings* the Divine Presence to rest on the individual, it is merely a *precondition* for the Divine Presence to be revealed. Because G-d does not reside among those that are haughty, the person must therefore have a degree of humility for the *Shechina* to reside.

In this sense, humility is similar to any of the conditions of strength, wealth and wisdom, all of which were facilitators for the Divine Presence.

Level 2

The **second level** is attained when the humility is not only a prerequisite for the resting of the Divine Presence, but it actually *leads* to the divine revelation—this now being the possession of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a greater revelation than that of the Divine Presence, and when one has true humility to the degree of this second level, their humility enables them to receive this more lofty revelation.

In the above two ways, the humility of the *individual* is pronounced. It is because the individual is humble that the G-d's Presence rests upon him. The individual with his humility however, are separate entities from G-d in these cases.

Level 3

On the highest and **third level**, the individual's humility is not expressed by the fact that he is *not* haughty, but that he involves himself with the lowest of people. Within such a person, the humility and the expression of G-d are not *two* separate things, rather, they are one and the same.

This that an individual who is on a different plain than those around him lowers himself to their level, is a direct expression of G-d's attribute, "with the lofty and the holy ones I dwell, and with the crushed and humble in spirit." The

humility *is* the *very* expression of G-d's presence upon this individual. It is not that the humility and the Divine Presence are two separate things but that the expression of the Divine Presence *is* the humility.

Explaining the variant versions

Along with the above explanations of the levels of humility and how they relate to prophecy, can be understood the difference of the way that the story of Hillel and Shmuel the Little was formulated in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds.

When the Babylonian Talmud said, "There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the **Shechina** should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it," it is understood that it is not speaking of the exalted level of revelation of the Holy Spirit but of a lower level—that of which the Divine Presence (i.e. the term *Shechina*) rests upon the person.

It is therefore understood that to attain this level of the dwelling of the Divine Presence, one need not reach the highest levels of humility and it is enough if one has attained the two lower levels thereof. The first level being that the person feels small in his own eyes, and the second that he feels smaller than others.

These are the two ranks of humility that the Babylonian Talmud pronounces that Hillel and his student Shmuel the Little attained.

Shmuel the *Little*, the student of Hillel, was holding at a lower level than that of his teacher. Though he was not famous for his tremendous humility—as was his teacher—he nevertheless "would make himself small" and was not great in his own eyes.

His teacher Hillel, however, attained a higher degree of humility. He was famous for the way that he was humble before others.

It is for this reason that when Shmuel the Little was eulogized they said, “Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man!” first mentioning his lower trait of humility. Yet, when Hillel his teacher was eulogized they said, “Alas, the pious man! Alas, the humble man,” for his level of humility was on entirely different level.

These though, are the two traits as they relate to the Divine Presence. The Jerusalem Talmud however, is discussing the higher level of revelation, that of the Holy Spirit.

To attain the level where the Holy Spirit rests upon the individual, one must be on a level where they lower themselves from their exalted position to deal with those that are on a lower standing than that of their own.

This humility was highlighted in Hillel’s character:

He was an individual whom it was impossible to make upset. The Talmud⁹ recounts that when an individual made a wager with his friend, promising that he could upset Hillel, he failed though he tried with various attempts. When he complained to Hillel that because of him he lost the bet, Hillel responded, “Hillel is worth it that you should lose 400 zuz and yet another 400 zuz through him, yet Hillel shall not lose his temper.”

The Talmud relates how Hillel found the spark of G-dliness in everybody, and lowered himself to one and all. Even those Gentiles who seemed that their desire to convert was incredulous, Hillel found their spark and brought them “under the wings of the *Shechina*¹⁰.”

This is also the type of humility that the Jerusalem Talmud is discussing concerning Shmuel the Little:

The Talmud there, in its description of Shmuel the Little, states, “And why was he called the

little? Because he would make himself small. Others say that it was because he was a little smaller than Shmuel *HaRamasi*.”

Not only does the Talmud say that he made himself small but it expresses that his personality was similar to that of Shmuel *HaRamasi*. Shmuel was an actual prophet who surely had the greatest degree of humility. By comparing Shmuel the Little to Shmuel the prophet, it is understood that Shmuel the Little as well possessed a tremendous degree of humility.

On the verse¹¹, “Here I am; bear witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed; whose ox did I take, or whose ass did I take, or whom did I rob; or whom did I oppress, or from whose hand did I take a ransom, that I hide my eyes therewith, and I shall restore to you,” Rashi comments as follows:

Text 9

When I used to go from city to city to judge them concerning their needs, I used to go on my own ass, although I should have taken [one] of theirs.

Rashi, I Shmuel 12:3

Shmuel’s dedication to each and every Jew was to the extent that though he was exceedingly great, he would travel from city to city on his own donkey to deal with all their personal issues and squabbles.

When the Jerusalem Talmud describes this type of humility regarding both sages it says, “Alas, the humble pious man.” The meaning of this phrase is not that it is expressing two character traits of humility and piety, but humble-piety. Their piety went beyond the letter of the law, as

⁹ Shabbos 31a.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ I Shmuel 12:3.

they expressed their humility to all, even those that were the lowest of the low¹².

Another story

In the end of the Jerusalem Talmud, tractate Sota a story of humility and the revelation of the Holy Spirit is recorded, similar to that recorded earlier regarding Hillel and Shmuel the Little:

Text 10

On one occasion the Elders entered [the home] of Bas Gadya in Yericho; a *Bas Kol* went out which announced to them, "There is in your midst two men who are deserving of the Holy Spirit and Hillel is one of them." They all looked at Shmuel the Little. On another occasion the Elders entered the upper chamber in Yavneh and a *Bas Kol* went out which announced to them, "There is in your midst two men who are deserving of the Holy Spirit and Shmuel the Little is one of them." They all looked at Eliezer the Son of Hurkanos. They were happy that their thoughts were in line with the Omnipresent.

Jerusalem Talmud, Sota 9:13

The accounts seem similar, yet there is an essential difference. In the first account the *Bas Kol* only mentioned one sage, while in the second, two sages were mentioned. In the first account the *Bas Kol* enumerated who was worthy of the Holy Spirit and in this account one was left out.

This can be explained as follows:

The first episode related, "On one occasion the Elders entered [the home] of *Bas Gadya* in

Yericho; a *Bas Kol* went out which announced to them, 'There is in your midst one man who is deserving that the Holy Spirit should alight upon him, but his generation is unworthy of it.' They all looked at Hillel the Elder and when he died, they lamented over him, 'Alas, the humble pious man, disciple of Ezra!'"

At that time, Shmuel the Little was not mentioned at all, as at that time he was not meritorious of prophecy.

The second account was when the *Bas Kol* stated, "There is in your midst two men who are deserving of the Holy Spirit and Hillel is one of them.' They all looked at Shmuel the Little." At that point, Shmuel the Little had reached a level of which he had merited prophecy, but was still on a lesser level than his teacher.

The third account was when the *Bas Kol* stated, "There is in your midst two men who are deserving of the Holy Spirit and Shmuel the Little is one of them." This declaration was announced already after Hillel's passing and Shmuel the Little had reached a level similar to his teacher. He is therefore mentioned just as his teacher was mentioned.

R' Eliezer ben Hurkanos

The Jerusalem Talmud stated that in addition to the *Bas Kol* announcing that Shmuel the Little were worthy for prophecy, the Rabbis "all looked at Eliezer the Son of Hurkanos," saying that he was worthy of prophecy as well.

This mention of worthiness as well was stated because of the tremendous humility that R. Eliezer ben Hurkonos possessed. The Talmud

¹² Though the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmuds are discussing the same story, it is obvious that during the lives of Hillel and Shmuel the Little they achieved different stages of humility at various points. The Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds therefore stress different parts of their lives in order

to make their respective points. The Jerusalem Talmud was at a higher level and therefore stressed a level of humility that was possible to be achieved in its day, while the Babylonian Talmud, which was written later, stressed a lower level of humility that was possible to be achieved in its time.

recounts the following account of R. Eliezer, which emphasizes this quality of his:

Text 11

They asked R. Eliezer: “What about So-and-so in the World to Come?” — He replied, “Have you asked me only about this one?” “May one save the lamb from the lion?” — He said to them: “Have you asked me only about the lamb?” “May one save the shepherd from the lion?” — He said to them: “Have you asked me only about the shepherd?” “May a *mamzer* inherit?” — [He replied]: “May he marry the wife of his brother who died without issue?” “May one whitewash his house?” — [He replied]: “May one whitewash his grave?” — [His evasion was due] not to his desire to divert them with words [counter-questions], but because he never said anything that he had not heard from his teacher.

Talmud, Yuma 66b

Because of R’ Eliezer’s humility, he evaded all the questions that were posed to him that he had not outrightly heard from his teachers.

While R’ Eliezer was indeed tremendously humble, it was only in relation to his teachers and students. He could not, however, be compared to the humility of Shmuel the Little (especially when Shmuel the Little was on a level similar to Hillel). It is for this reason that the name of R. Eliezer ben Hurkonus was not explicitly mentioned when the *Bas Kol* announced that there were two who were worthy of the Holy Spirit. Though he was worthy for the Holy Spirit, he was not worthy that his name be mentioned.

(Based on Likutei Sichos 38, Beha’alotcha 2, reworked by Rabbi Dovid Markel. To see other projects and to partner in our work, see: www.Neirot.com.)