

PARSHAS KI SISA – MALCOLM TOPEROFF

”וימהר משה ויקד ארצה וישתחו (שמות לד:ח):”

The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt”l asks (Likutei Sichos vol 19 p. 106):

What was the cause of Moshe’s reaction to the proclamation of the 13 middos?

Rashi explains that when Moshe saw the shechina passing and he heard a voice calling the 13 middos, he immediately prostrated himself.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin 111a brings down two opinions on this:

Rabbi Chanina Ben Gamla says that he saw the attribute of ארך אפים. The רבנן say that he saw the attribute of truth.

The Maharsha explains:- certainly Moshe knew the attributes of Hashem, therefore his excitement here must have been at one of the attributes in particular. As a result of this, the sages in the Gemara argued about which attribute was the cause of Moshe’s reaction.

The Hadar Zekeinim quotes an opinion who says that when Hashem said על שלשים ועל פקד עון אבות על בנים, Moshe feared that Hashem was going to add the fifth and sixth generation, so he immediately prostrated himself.

The Chizkuni similarly says why וימהר משה? Because he was worried that Hashem might say more than four generations.

The Ibn Ezra disagrees with the above suggestion, on the basis that Moshe would not have attempted to stop Hashem mid-speech.

The Bechor Shor (quoted in Rav Chaim Chavel’s notes on Chizkuni) adds that according to the opinion that Hashem waits to punish children following their parent’s evil ways, until the 4th generation – "הלואי שימתין עד" – it would have been even better if Hashem would wait until the 10th generation to punish them and therefore Moshe should not have hurried to bow.

Interesting anecdote on the Ibn Ezra

Rabbi Dr Dovid Gottlieb Shlit”a, who teaches at Ohr Sameach in Yerushalayim shared with me that the Ibn Ezra was so poor that he wandered around Europe to make a Parnassah and in fact wrote three different Peirushim on the Torah under the patronage of 3 different noblemen.

The Ibn Ezra said about himself regarding Parnassah, if he were an undertaker, there would not be any funerals and if he were a candlemaker, the sun would shine all day and all night!

The above Dvar Torah is dedicated to the Refuah Shelaima of my daughter אסתר חנה בת דינה and for הצלחה רבה, for my other daughter קרן בת דינה for her studies in Peninim seminary in Yerushalayim.