

Parshat Vaera
By: Mark Hus



This week's Parsha shows a filial relationship that stands in stark contrast to the ones we saw in Sefer Bereishit: two brothers who actually love each other and work well together!

Bereishit starts out with Cain killing Abel. Isaac and Ishmael don't reconcile until late in their lives. Yaakov and Esav don't relate well until many years and even more miles have separated them. And the twelve sons of Yaakov have multiple issues. All the brothers hate Yosef. Yet, because the children of Leah look down on their brothers who are the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, Yosef does "hang out" with those brothers (*Bereishit, 37:2*) -- but they certainly are not heard from when Yosef is sold into slavery. (They had not protested when their siblings were threatening to take Yosef's life either, so that is no surprise.)

But everything turns around in Shemot. When Moshe protests that he is not an orator, but is actually quite the opposite, G-d responds that Aharon, the Levite, (invoking another familial relationship) is coming to greet his brother Moshe and that when he sees him, Aharon will "rejoice in his heart." In other words, he will be truly happy and excited to see his brother.

In the second aliyah of this week's parsha, Moshe protests to the Almighty that inasmuch as the Children of Israel did not listen to him, how can G-d expect that the mighty Pharaoh would heed his words. The response from the Lord is to speak to Moshe **and Aharon** and command them both to go before Pharaoh, (*Shemot, 6:13*). The next time they are referred to, it is Aharon who is mentioned first, perhaps because he was older, but since the Almighty was talking to Moshe most of the time, the fact that Aharon gets top billing, shows us the strength of their relationship and that they were, in effect, two men acting in complete unison. Astonishingly, they are a team and act in tandem to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt and out of the bonds of slavery. They will work together with only one rift -- about Moshe's wife at the end of Parshat Beha'alotcha.

The personal rewards they get from acting in a positive and supportive way with one another are overwhelming. Moshe leads the people and becomes the person who talks to the Children of Israel in G-d's name -- despite his earlier assertions that he could not speak well. Aharon becomes the High Priest, who is beloved by all the Jewish people.

On the other hand, when they are separated and do not have each other to lean on, things do not go so well for them. When Moshe spends forty days and nights on Mount Sinai, Aharon ends up creating the golden calf and Moshe shatters the Ten Commandments!

Our takeaway from the story of these two extraordinary brothers is just how important it is for brothers (and sisters) to get along and support one another. The sky is the limit when they do so. May all of our Jewish brothers and sisters (and for that matter, all of mankind) act in harmony with one another. The world would be a far better place.

Shabbat Shalom and Chodesh Tov.