

Va'eyra - Rabbi Lerner - January 6, 2013

6:10-13 We have here an unusual grouping of pasukim here right after Hashem reiterates His promise of a nation and a homeland to the Avos who never complained about God's methods. There are three pasukim that are set off from the previous section with spaces, followed by a single pasuk set off by itself. In each case, the Torah is creating separate parshios with special spacing in the Torah. There first is a complete parsha pesuchah here - a section separated before and afterwards by a new line, followed by one pasuk which is a parshas stumah. There are new things being highlighted here - particularly strange is a parsha consisting of a single pasuk.

6:10-11: *Hashem spoke to Moshe saying "Come, speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he send the Children of Israel from his land."* **Ramban**: sometimes Hashem says Bo, sometimes Tzeh El Pharaoh; Bo means come to him in the palace; Tzeh means to meet him outside of his comfort zone, out of the palace, often at the Nile where he is relieving himself.

6:12: *Moshe spoke before Hashem, saying "Behold the Children of Israel have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me? And I have sealed lips."* These pasukim appear in the Torah after Moshe's first failed attempt to free the people from Pharaoh. God had just rebuked Moshe for criticizing Him, comparing him to the Avos never complained about God's ways. Moshe is complaining now that even the Jews haven't listened to him, so Kal Vachomer Pharaoh won't.

Why are these pasukim highlighted? This is the first time in the Torah where we have the pasuk of *Vayedaber Hashem El Moshe Laymor*. **Ramban**: The **Radak** and others say that Laymor means I am talking to you, for you to then transmit to others. The Ramban disagrees with this interpretation, which would be indicating here that it is for Moshe to go and tell this to Pharaoh. If this were the correct interpretation of this phrase, there are a number of pasukim in the Torah that would make no sense, and that can, therefore, refute this meaning. An example is in Bereishis 31:29, when Lavan is chasing Yaacov and Hashem appears to Lavan in a dream of warning, Lavan tells Yaacov "*It is in my power to do you all tremendous harm, but the God of your father addressed me last night Laymor, 'beware of speaking with Yaacov either good or bad.'*" Here Laymor cannot mean to transmit it to Yaacov. In addition to pasukim like this, there are other places where it says *Vayedaber El Moshe Laymor Ve'Amarta Aleyhem* - this would be redundant; if it already means to give the message over to them, why repeat it in the very next words? Therefore, Laymor means something different. What would be more correct is that Hashem is completely elucidating and explaining the meaning of what he is telling Moshe; in all places it means an Amirah Gemurah - a full blown explanation, a comprehensive treatment of the subject matter that leaves no room for doubt; He is not just giving something over to Moshe by way of a remez, an allusion. This is the most frequent pasuk in the Torah, to show that Moshe always received a clear interpretation from God in an open matter - he was greater than all other Neviim who always received communication from God while asleep, with vague images and allusions - Moshe always received a clear explanation while he was completely awake and alert - explicit, crystal clear explanations without leaving any room for doubt. That is why Laymor is used all the time with Moshe - what was told to him was always clear-cut. It had to be this way because Moshe was transmitting the entire Torah to the Jewish people for eternity. Why then was Laymor used with Lavan? Because Hashem told Lavan not to harm Yaacov in a very clear statement, a very explicit warning not to be misunderstood. Laymor always means without any wiggle-room for doubt.

Rav Nissan Alpert: If the Ramban is correct, why does it not say Laymor by the ten plagues? None of them have Laymor! Ramban would have to answer that it was the upper wisdom of God, that when the ten plagues were transmitted to Moshe it was by remez, allusion, and not with a clear explanation; the reason is that God doesn't want to completely associate His good name with anything bad; when Hashem is destroying human beings, when the Midas Hadin is prevailing, He doesn't want to say it in an open way to associate His name with it. Likewise, there must be a reason each time in the Torah when it does not say Laymor that God does not want to associate His name with that command or statement openly.

6:12: Why does Moshe start kvetching about this again, after having already complained to Hashem that the people and Pharaoh won't listen to him? **Ramban:** Moshe's complaint is that God sent him to Pharaoh, and it ended up basically mocked Moshe - he felt that he was set up by Hashem, with Moshe then ending up making it worse for the people. Furthermore, he is asking how can he go to Pharaoh when he has a speech impediment? The Jewish people don't listen to him, neither will Pharaoh. Maybe they didn't listen to him because he could not speak clearly or use the right words - he was not an orator. And if he cannot do it properly with the common people, then how can he speak to the emperor of the world? Hashem had told Moshe at the burning bush that he would go with the elders of Israel to Pharaoh - this was comforting to Moshe, because he would have others with him who could speak; but now Hashem is telling him in 6:11 to go to Pharaoh by himself. Moshe says that it would be a joke for him to go by himself. Hashem then tells him that he will not be going alone - Aharon will go with him. Aharon will speak to Pharaoh on Moshe's behalf. We see this in the next pasuk, 6:13, when Hashem commands the two of them to speak to Pharaoh and the people. This made Moshe feel better. How then does Aharon get the exact message from God of what he is to say? **Abarbanel:** Moshe and Aharon are not at the same level, not nearly in the same league, and are therefore, not given prophecy at the same level; Aharon is not up to Moshe's level, and Moshe does not go down to Aharon's level. They each received the nevuah at their respective levels. Hashem is then guaranteeing that the elders will listen to them in this pasuk.

6:13: This is a new paragraph consisting of only one pasuk - a tremendous highlighted pasuk. *Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon, and commanded them regarding the Children and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.* **Rashi:** because Moshe kvetched that his 'lips were sealed,' Aharon was made his partner, to be Moshe's spokesman. This pasuk would seem to mean that He charged them regarding Bnei Yisrael - He charged them to conduct themselves with the Jews in a soft, polite, gentle way, and to be prepared to take on all of the problems and complaints of the Jewish people. Other meforshim agree with Rashi: **Ibn Ezra:** Rabbi Yehoshuah says that it means they should not get angry at the Jews because they will not listen to him; they are too beaten down to listen to anyone. The **Sforno** says something similar. **Oznayim LaTorah:** the Sifri in Beha'alozechah says that Hashem is telling them that they are very contrary people who will disagree and impose on him a lot; Moshe and Aharon need to accept it as part of Jewish leadership - 'they will be cursing you and stoning you with rocks.' Hashem says that this is part of the job. Hashem is telling them what it is like being the leader of the Jews - it is not about honor - it is a burden for them to bear. They need to accept and be prepared for the worst. This is why right after this pasuk, the Torah goes into the yichus of the first three tribes of Israel. The simple explanation for this is that the Torah only wanted to give the yichus of Moshe and Aharon at this point of their being charged with this great mission, and it doesn't want to skip over the first two tribes out of respect for them. But a better reason for mentioning the genealogy of these tribes now is that the greatest troubles Moshe

had come from these three tribes: Dasan and Aviram, who were a constant thorn in Moshe's side, were from sheivet Reuven; Zimri, the tribal leader who openly flouted Moshe and God with a princess of Moav, was from Shimon; and Korach who led a rebellion against Moshe was from sheivet Levi. That is why it mentions the first three tribes, to warn Moshe that he will get his biggest issues and challenges from them.

Sforno: It means that Hashem appointed them as officers over the Jewish people.

Abarbanel: this pasuk means that Hashem gave Moshe and Aharon grace, honor and respect in the eyes of the people and Pharaoh - that all of them should have now have unbounded respect for Moshe and Aharon. Hashem is making them look good. **Ramban**: this was a great honor for Moshe; he was so humble and felt himself so unworthy, that God made him a great, honored leader in the eyes of the people and Pharaoh by the end of the story. Hashem makes him the greatest, most popular leader as a reward for his humility. **Or Hachayim**: It says Vayetzaveim, He commanded them, to say that He made them like kings over the Jewish people and Pharaoh. He placed the fear of Moshe and Aharon over the Jewish people and Pharaoh; that they should have a sense of power and royalty over the Jewish people, that the people should always follow Moshe, and when he will tell them it is time to leave Egypt, they will obey.

When it says in 6:13 that He charged them with regards to the Jewish people, it can mean either that He charged Moshe and Aharon to be patient with the nation, or that He commanded the people and Pharaoh to have respect for them. An alternate meaning: **Netziv**: it is the language of a mitzvah - there was a mitzvah here. **Rabbeinu Bachya**: the Jews were completely immersed in idolatry in Egypt; He commanded Moshe and Aharon to get the Jewish people to shape up and rid themselves of idolatry; we see this in Yechezkel where the pasuk explicitly says that Hashem told Moshe to have the Jews in Egypt rid themselves of the defiling idolatry, to stop believing in paganism.

Meshech Chachmah: The Yerushalmi asks what did Hashem command them? He told Moshe and Aharon to teach the people the concept of letting one's slaves go free. But this was not a command for the future when they are in Eretz Yisrael. Even there in Egypt there were some powerful, wealthy Jews who had other Jews as their slaves; the Egyptians had so many slaves, they sold some to these wealthy Jews; some Jews enslaved other Jews. These powerful Jews were from the three tribes of Reuven, Shimon, and Levi - they were the big machers in the Egypt; not all Jew were equals. This is why the next parsha of the genealogy of the three tribes comes here - it is enough that the Egyptians were enslaving us - we don't need the Jews to enslave us as well. Moshe was to warn those tribes not to emulate the Egyptians - the Jews cannot leave Egypt until they get their own house in order.